



Appointments & Briefings

March 21, 2013 – 7:00 PM – **Minutes**
City Council Chamber, Room 214, Municipal Building

****View Agenda ****

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS

DATE: MARCH 21, 2013

TIME: 7:01 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DENIS LAWRENCE, JR., CHAIRMAN; HENRY BOUSQUET; DEBORA COELHO; BRUCE DUARTE, JR.; JANE GONSALVES (7:10); JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS; JAMES OLIVEIRA

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DAVID ALVES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; BRIAN GOMES; JOHN SAUNDERS

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Councillor Lawrence called the Ordinance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read a Memo from Councillor Gomes stating he is unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment and the Clerk also stated that Councillor Alves called to report he was at the Gaming Commission Meeting; Councillor Martins also informed the Committee that Councillor Saunders called him and asked him to inform the Committee that he would not be in attendance due to a prior commitment. The Memo from Councillor Gomes was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Lopes.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of MANDY ABOUCHANAB, New Bedford, MA 02746, to the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, replacing Reverend Richard Wilson, whose term has expired; this term will expire in December 2014. (Ref'd 12/20/12, tabled 2/19/13) (1)

The applicant was not in attendance, so the matter remained on the table.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JEFF COSTA, New Bedford, MA 02740, to the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, replacing Ji Tae "JT" Ghim, who has resigned; this term will expire December 2015 (Ref'd 12/20/12, tabled 2/19/13) was removed from the table and received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Lopes (2)

Mr. Jeff Costa explained that he has been a resident of Downtown New Bedford for approximately four (4) years and has lived all over the world. He works in the fitness industry, is interested in diversity and would like to do his part for the community in which he lives.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of JEFF COSTA, New Bedford, MA,

02740, to the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, replacing Ji Tae “JT” Ghim, who has resigned; this term will expire December 2015.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of CELIA BRITO, New Bedford, MA 02740 to the REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, replacing Jenny Fialho, who has resigned; this term will expire July 2017 (Ref’d 1/10/13, tabled 2/19/13) was removed from the table and received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins. (3)

Ms. Brito was not in attendance but had called the Committee Members to ask her questions as she was unable to attend this meeting.

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of CELIA BRITO, New Bedford, MA 02740 to the REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, replacing Jenny Fialho, who has resigned; this term will expire July 2017. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of ROBERT SCHILLING, New Bedford, MA 02740, to the NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY, replacing Reverend Leona Fisher, whose term has expired; this term will expire December 2014 (Ref’d 2/14/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Martins. (4)

Mr. Schilling stated that he is a trained attorney and has worked as both a prosecutor and a defense attorney. He feels his vast experience in the legal profession could bring something positive and necessary to the Housing Authority.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of ROBERT SCHILLING, New Bedford, MA 02740, to the NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY, replacing Reverend Leona Fisher, whose term has expired; this term will expire December 2014. This motion passed on a Roll Call vote of Yeas 7, Nays 1, with Councillor Gonsalves opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Gonsalves and Bousquet, requesting that Wire Inspector Michael Baker and Department of Inspectional Services Commissioner Danny Romanowicz meet with the Committee on Appointments & Briefings, regarding the requirement for licensed electricians to produce a signed contract in order to obtain a wiring permit if the project is valued at \$3,000.00 or higher (Ref’d 1/24/13); and a Communication, Councillor Gonsalves, submitting copy of a letter dated April 27, 2012, to DIS Commissioner Danny Romanowicz from Officers of the New Bedford Master Electricians Association, Inc., relative to licensed electricians and wiring permits (Ref’d 1/24/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins. (5, 5a)

Attorney Shannon Shreve from the City Solicitor’s Office provided an overview of the problem by explaining that some electrical contractors are being dishonest regarding their fees when applying for permits. By doing so, they are cheating the city and its taxpayers out of funds that should rightfully be paid. Therefore, the city hopes to correct this problem by requiring that the licensed electricians show their signed contracts with their customers which indicate the fees they are being paid. He added that this requirement would only be on jobs that are estimated to be over \$3,000.

Councillor Gonsalves asked if other cities or towns do this. Attorney Shreve responded that Lowell, Ludlow and Canton all currently do this, and probably several others. Councillor Gonsalves then asked if there are, in fact, documented cases of electrical contractors being dishonest with the city about what they are charging.

Mike Baker, the City's Wire Inspector, addressed this issue. He stated that there are five specific situations where they know this is happening or has happened.

Councillor Bousquet asked Inspector Baker if some electricians are bold-faced lying. Inspector Baker replied "yes."

Councillor Gonsalves asked if this situation is specific to the electrical trade or does it also extend to other construction trades. Commissioner Danny Romanowicz stated that electrical fees are the only permits that are calculated by the percentage of the contract amount. The others are calculated by square footage.

Mr. Ken Ferreira – Treasurer of the Electrician's Association, spoke on behalf of the Master Electricians. He stated that the State of MA has issued a statement that something like this cannot be done. He stated that no electrical contractor in any other municipality in the state has ever been asked to produce a signed contract in order to verify the amount of money for the permit fee. He and others in the trade feel insulted by the city assuming that they are all dishonest. He also stated, there are times particularly with regular customers, where they do not draw up official contracts; nor do they want to start now.

Discussion continued and Councillor Lawrence recommended that this ultimately go to the Ordinance Committee. However, Councillor Lopes stated that he will be putting a motion on the next City Council agenda to address this.

On motion by Councillor Duarte, and seconded by Councillor Gonsalves, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting an International Sister City Agreement between the City of New Bedford and the City of Cuxhaven, Germany, the City of Cuxhaven has a marine terminal facility for cargo and offshore wind components similar to those being developed in the City of New Bedford (Ref'd 2/28/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Oliveira. (6)

Matt Morrissey, Economic Development Council Director, stated that Cuxhaven, Germany has been at the forefront of off shore wind energy for 15 years, and 9 major projects have been deployed from Cuxhaven, which is a city remarkably similar to New Bedford, although its population is about 57,000. He explained that the relationship with Cuxhaven will enable regular communication, including but not limited to quarterly video conferences between the two cities.

On motion by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Gonsalves, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of an International Sister City Agreement between the City of New Bedford and the City of Cuxhaven, Germany. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Related Motion, Councillor Martins, requesting that the Personnel Director Angela Natho, be invited to the next Committee on Appointments and Briefings meeting held in Executive Session with a list of names and addresses of applicants that applied for the positions of CFO, Director of Tourism, City Planner and the Director of the Harbor Development Commission so the City Council can discuss and review resumes to find out how many New Bedford applicants applied for above-referenced

positions (Ref'd 1/10/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Coelho and seconded by Councillor Martins. (7)

On motion by Councillor Coelho and seconded by Councillor Duarte, the Committee VOTED: To go into Executive Session with the intention of returning to regular session. This motion passed on a voice vote.

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. and re-entered regular session at 8:15 p.m.

No action was taken on this matter at this time.

Councillor Duarte made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Martins.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees