



Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods

April 22, 2015– 7:02 PM - **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, City Hall, Room 214

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: APRIL 22, 2015
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, CHAIRMAN; KERRY WINTERSON, VICE-CHAIRMAN; DAVID ALVES; HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY; DEBORA COELHO; JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD; JAMES OLIVEIRA; DANA REBEIRO

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Councillor Gomes called the Public Safety Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read a Communication from Councillor Morad stating she would be late in attending tonight's meeting due to a prior commitment, this Communication was received and placed by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Winterson.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Gomes and Martins, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with any teachers and Security Resource Officers from New Bedford High School, or the three Middle Schools in the City for the purposes of discussing exactly what is going on in our schools, exactly how significant is the disruptive behavior and violence against student and teachers; and further, that the Committee also set up a meeting with the students for the purposes of getting their input on exactly what is their perspective on what is going on in our schools; and further that Lou St. John, President, New Bedford Educator's Association, also be invited to said meeting (Ref'd 02/13/14) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Carney. (1)

Councillor Gomes explained that he had been in contact with the Chief of Police and that they are working on issues as it relates to student and faculty safety within the public school system.

Councillor Alves made a reference of a news article that was on the ABC news website, he asked that the article be received and placed on file and put into the record. The motion was made by Councillor Alves to receive and place on file and was seconded by Councillor Lopes.

There was no one present from the list of invitees to this meeting.

On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Carney, 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 Written Motion, Councillors Coelho and Lopes, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, invite the Department of Public Infrastructure Commissioner Labelle, to a meeting for discussion of the current conditions of the restrooms/bathhouses at our public beaches and possible options for improving the conditions for the convenience of patrons visiting the beaches and for health concerns in the neighborhoods near the beaches (Ref'd 07/18/13, 03/19/15 – remain in Committee) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (2)

The Chair recognized Ken Blanchard, DFFM Commissioner to address this issue.

Councillor Coelho asked Mr. Blanchard if the bathroom facilities will be up and running this summer. Commissioner Blanchard responded that the city has been working on the issue for the past sixteen (16) months. This summer, however, they will continue to use portable restrooms that were placed at the beach like it was last summer. They are working to improve the facilities but it is taking time and funds are needed to move the restoration forward. He introduced Mark Champagne from his department to give an overview of the restoration project.

Mr. Champagne explained that the department had one a walk-through of the premises that need to be restored and repaired. They are in the process of putting together a design that will work and be affordable. They are currently working on the proper permitting and using Civil Engineers in designing the restoration project as it relates to the public facilities at both beaches. He reiterated that however, for the summer of 2015 they will reset the portable comfort stations at the beach.

Councillor Winterson asked what the differences between East and the West side projects were. Mr. Champagne explained nothing per se, on the West side except for the pavilion they are going to set it up so that you can have outdoor dining and be able to permit special events at that facility.

Councillor Bousquet asked what kind of work needed to be done at the pavilion. Mr. Champagne explained it needed some electrical work improvement and plumbing to provide electricity and lighting and outlets outside on the water side of the pavilion. This will allow caterers to bring in food; and it will also allow for entertainment to take place on the pavilion.

Councillor Lopes spoke in praise of the project moving forward at the beaches.

On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Winterson, the Committee VOTED: To take “No Further Action” on this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Bousquet, Council President Lopes, Councillors Martins, Gomes, Coelho, Morad, Carney, Alves, Winterson, Rebeiro and Oliveira requesting, on behalf of the Citizens of New Bedford, that Chief of Police David Provencher and his Community Police force appear before the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to discuss their neighborhood by neighborhood strategy to quell the eruption of violence in the City. (Ref'd 06/26/14) (3)

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

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Oliveira, Lopes, Council President Gomes, Martins, Winterson, Alves, Carney and Rebeiro, requesting that the New Bedford School Department consider assigning a daily crossing Guard or Flag person at all City schools to control traffic and hinder the high rates of speed the daily commuters continue to travel during school hours (Ref'd 2/12/15) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (4)

Councillor Alves asked if the invitees were present, and the Clerk explained that they were not but that invitations had gone out to them. Councillor Alves asked that a letter be sent from the Committee expressing their disappointment that one invited as it related to this issue concerning the safety of students found it necessary to attend the public safety meeting.

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

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On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Coelho, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading and follow the Chair's recommendation on item five (5) and take "No Further Action" on items six (6), seven (7) and eight (8). This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Lopes, requesting, that Police Chief David Provencher provide the City Council with an update as it relates to any and all issues that might arise from Governor Baker's decision to reduce the Shannon Anti-gang Grant by \$1.25 million across the Commonwealth; and further, requesting by what percentage of funds will New Bedford's award be reduced by. (Ref'd 2/12/15) *Refer to the Police Chief* (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Coelho, requesting that due to the neighborhood shootings which occurred on September 9, 2013, resulting in the lockdown of the Sgt. William Carney Academy, that Police Chief Provencher and a representative from the Mayor's Office be invited to a Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meeting to discuss when the Police Department is going to bring back Community Policing and to discuss the overall decline of New Bedford's neighborhoods, this Councillor has received many constituent calls, there is a sense of fear in the City about gang activity, juveniles with weapons, graffiti vandalism and the deterioration of our City's neighborhoods and people want something done about this. (Ref'd 09/12/13) (6)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting an explanation from the Mayor's Office and DPI Commissioner Ron Labelle, as to the location of the cameras that were supposed to be installed along Acushnet Avenue at the intersection of Coggeshall Street, these cameras would have assisted in two recent criminal assaults, one with a gun and one with a knife. These cameras could have helped in the immediate arrest of the suspects; and further, requesting that an appropriation be made to install surveillance cameras in any newly revitalized main intersection or in business areas to assist the Police Department in deterring crime such as what has occurred in the past two weekends and assist in public safety throughout the City; and also to assist law-enforcement in solving the many crimes that are committed. (Ref'd 06/26/14) (7)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Mayor, Licensing Board and the Police Chief, favorably consider asking all the bars and liquor establishments along Acushnet Avenue and Belleville Avenue within an eight block radius, north and south, east and west of the

Feast of the Blessed Sacrament location to close at midnight, on all four nights of the Feast giving law enforcement the ability to control the crowds and provide a safe area for all residents and tourists and those visiting the area for this special event. (Ref'd 8/21/14) (8)

Councillor Alves made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Winterson.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:19 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees