



Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods

February 16, 2016– 7:06 PM - **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, City Hall, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: FEBRUARY 16, 2016
TIME: 7:06 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO, CHAIRPERSON; BRIAN GOMES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; NAOMI CARNEY; STEVEN MARTINS; LINDA MORAD; JAMES OLIVEIRA; DANA REBEIRO; KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS HENRY BOUSQUET; JOSEPH LOPES

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Councillor Coelho called the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to order and took attendance. Communications were read into the record stating the absences of Councillors Bousquet and Lopes. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Winterson.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Coelho, requesting, that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods hold Citizens Input Time prior to meetings *that are held outside of Council Chamber*; and further, that Committee members take said Committee out of Council Chambers and on the road, to include locations where Neighborhood Groups are held and Community Centers, to allow New Bedford's citizens to voice their concerns (Ref'd 1/28/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (1)

Attorney Gerwatowski gave a brief description of the intent of the motion.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Winterson, the Committee VOTED: To add the Appointments & Briefings Citizens Input Time language to be followed as a guideline at the Public Safety meetings.

On the question for discussion:

- a. People will not call in to Clerk's Office to schedule speaking time
- b. People will be recognized to speak at each off-site Public Safety Meeting for a _____ total of three minutes, not to exceed the first thirty minutes of the meeting.
- c. The rest of the Appointments & Briefings language should be added in writing
- d. The rules/guidelines should be written and copies for distribution at each off-site meeting.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Coelho, Abreu, Rebeiro and Carney, requesting, ONCE AGAIN, that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods review the streetlight situation in the City of New Bedford and request an update from DPI Commissioner Ronald Labelle, in addition to ONCE AGAIN, make plans for Ride-Along with all Councillors to review certain neighborhoods and areas to determine whether they received increased street lighting (Ref'd 1/28/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (2)

An email from Jeanne Safioleas, sent on behalf of Ron Labelle, was read into the record, informing them that Commissioner Labelle is unable to attend this meeting but should any Councillors request a review of city lighting the Department is willing to respond. Commissioner Labelle is also willing to attend a ride along to view lighting if that's what is needed. Councillor Oliveira made a motion to receive and place on file the email from Commissioner Labelle, which was seconded by Councillor Morad.

Councillor Coelho informed the Committee that she would reach out to Commissioner Labelle to schedule a tour of areas that need improvement and will revert back to the Committee with a date.

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Abreu, 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, Councillor Coelho, requesting, that the Police Department provide the City Council with the number of repeat overdoses in a twenty-four hour period in New Bedford, and that we look into possibly drafting an Ordinance addressing the matter; and further, that we ask our State Legislative Delegation to assist us in drafting a policy that would make it mandatory that anyone who overdoses, especially those who overdose repeatedly, not be treated and released, but held in the hospital for twenty-four hour surveillance, they are a harm to themselves and to society and are using up our resources (Ref'd 1/28/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (3)

City Solicitor Mikaela McDermott was present and addressed the Committee on this issue. She believes this is a State issue not a local one in which the city can legislate. She suggested the Council forward their concerns to the City's State Delegation asking them to address this issue. She mentioned that Governor Baker is moving forward with opium issues and legislation on the State level.

Councillor Rebeiro asked if there was anything on the books for suicidal watch guidelines that may be applicable to these situations, can the user's actions be considered suicidal in nature. Solicitor McDermott said she was not sure that this was beyond her expertise.

Attorney Gerwatowski commented that in the area of suicide St. Luke's for example has a mental health area that recognizes issues and will act accordingly, perhaps by securing the person in the Rogers Unit. He told the Committee that it is difficult for a municipality to create such a law and that it is better left up to the State to do this, as they have the ability to encompass all State Agencies that would become involved in addressing the opium issue.

Councillor Rebeiro asked if the city could declare a State of Emergency to get the State to act in an expedient manner.

Attorney Gerwatowski suggested that you would need to put together data through the New Bedford Police Department and give it to the Department of Public Health on the State level; it is difficult for a municipality to do and he suggested the city get their State Legislators involved.

Councillor Carney expressed her concerns as well and believes something should be done sooner than later, that they should rattle the cages at the State House, that we should also find a way to make the Police Department more pro-active; and we need to look at the Court system as well.

Councillor Abreu stated if it is out of our purview then that is fine, but we need to hear what the State plans to do to help out. It is a real problem, a public health epidemic, that it affects economic development in the city as well.

Attorney Gerwatowski suggested that the Council reach out to local Treatment Providers, such as St. Luke's and ask that they organize a summit to include, treatment providers, the State Delegation, the Mayor and City Council Offices, the Department of Public Health, the City Board of Health and the New Bedford Police Department, to bring people to the table. It is more of a treatment thing that needs to be addressed. This would allow all those invested in the issue to be on the same playing field.

Councillor Coelho informed the Committee that she would make such a recommendation and asked that the item be tabled.

On motion by Councillor Carney and seconded by Councillor Abreu, 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, Councillor Bousquet, requesting on the behalf of the residents of Rockdale Avenue, that several areas be considered for sidewalks and sidewalk improvement where there is a push for safe routes to schools; and further, that crosswalks also need to be assessed in an effort to make walking to schools safer for children trying to do so. (Ref'd 11/24/15) (4)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter until the next Public Safety Meeting. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading and follow the Chairs recommendation and take "No Further Action" on items 5, 6, 7 & 8, SEVERING items 7 & 8. This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Winterson, Bousquet and Coelho, requesting, that the City Council send a letter to the School Department relative to the Elizabeth Carter Brooks Elementary School, asking that they look into the current busing situation and explore alternative methods to provide busing to students who live within the 1.5 mile radius, the present situation creates a hardship for parents, grandparents and is a public safety for the students themselves.(Ref'd 9/10/15)
(5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, meet with the Superintendent of Schools, a representative of the

Administration, along with the Chief of Police to discuss what prevention policies are in place in City schools to guarantee the safety of all students, elementary to high school, in buildings across the City; and further, to discuss any safety precautions that can be implemented to guarantee the safety of all students while attending our public schools and anything that the City Council can do to make this an affirmative action on behalf of the students and the teachers in the New Bedford Public School System.(Ref'd 12/20/12, 05/14/13- tabled for 6 months, 03/25/14-tabled) (6)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that a round table summit meeting be held with the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, for the purpose of discussing and addressing a strategic plan of action on criminal and gang activity in the City of New Bedford; and further, that the following agencies be invited to attend said summit; Massachusetts Department of Public Safety, the District Attorney, the Police Chief, the City Solicitor, a representative from the Mayor's Office and the Mayor's Housing Task Force, the State Police, a member of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and any agency presently working with local law enforcement; and further, that all members of our State and Federal Legislative Delegation be invited to said meeting, which will be a collaborative effort working together for a safer City.(Ref'd 08/21/14) REMAIN IN COMMITTEE (7)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Gomes, Oliveira, Martins, Winterson, Bousquet, Alves, Coelho, Carney, Rebeiro, Council President Lopes and Councillor Morad requesting, that the New Bedford Police Union, Police Chief Provencher and Mayor Mitchell adopt the following wording "Loyalty, Integrity, Courage" uniformly placed on every Police vehicle, which will be a Mission Statement to the people and the City they serve, this will be the first time ever in the City of New Bedford that a statement in wording has ever been placed on Police Cruisers.(Ref'd 09/11/14, 03/16/15-tabled, 9/17/15- tabled) REMAIN IN COMMITTEE (8)

Councillor Oliveira made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Morad.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:33 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees