



Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods

May 19, 2016– 7:02 PM - **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, City Hall, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: MAY 19, 2016
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: BUTTONWOOD PARK SENIOR CENTER, 1 ONEIDA STREET, NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO, CHAIRPERSON; BRIAN GOMES, VICE-CHAIRMAN (7:09); IAN ABREU; HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY; JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS; LINDA MORAD; JAMES OLIVEIRA; KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR DANA REBEIRO

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Councillor Coelho called the Public Safety Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk announced that he received a verbal communication from Councillor Rebeiro stating she would be absent from this meeting.

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Councillor Coelho announced the start of Citizens Input Time for the Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods, there was one speaker as follows:

Jennifer Duarte, 159 Brooklawn Court, New Bedford, spoke on the issue of bullying at the school her children attend, which has led her to the decision to remove her children at the end of the school year and home school them.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the City step up its enforcement laws, during and after a major winter snow storm and issue tickets and fines to those who violate the law by throwing snow back into the plowed street and who neglect to shovel sidewalks in residential or business areas throughout the City; and further, that the City report to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods as to how many tickets were issued during the January 23rd snowstorm, to also include how many tickets were issued for parking violations and how many motor vehicles were towed during the snow storm. (Ref'd 1/28/16) (1)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, 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, Councillors Gomes and Carney, requesting immediate action be taken at the Keith Middle School, due to the dozens of complaints from parents and teachers about the on-going problems with students, calling the school out-of-control, disrespecting faculty and fellow students, not following directions and even unbecoming actions; and further, requesting a second Resource Officer be placed at the school until the school is brought under control, along with periodic walking patrols by New Bedford Police Department Gang Squad or any other public safety resource that is available throughout the day; further, that any Member of the City Council's Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods be allowed at a moment's notice to enter the school for a valuation of their own; furthermore, that the Superintendent Pia Durkin meet with the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to discuss these on-going issues of public safety in our public school system (Ref'd 3/10/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (2)

Councillor Gomes spoke on this issue and said he had spoken to Jonathan Carvalho from the School Department who informed him that Dr. Durkin was unable to attend this meeting. Councillor Gomes said he will wait to ask his questions when the School Department comes up before the Council during the budget hearings.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 8, Nays 2, with Councillors Martins and Morad opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Coelho, requesting, that a representative from the Police Department be invited to appear before the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to update the Committee members on the status of surveillance cameras throughout the City, these cameras are a tool in preventing crime; and further, that we look into the possibility of adding additional cameras in areas where panhandlers are aggressively attacking motorists in an attempt to curb some of this nuisance behavior (Ref'd 4/28/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (3)

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Winterson, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 1, with Councillor Martins opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Coelho, requesting, that a letter be sent to Acting Police Chief Lizotte or his successor, asking for a stronger and more visible Police presence due to the warmer weather and heavy drug activity along Davis Street, between Ashley Boulevard and Church Street and North Front Street, between Tallman Street and Collette Street; and further, requesting a greater Police

presence throughout the City (Ref'd 5/12/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (4)

Councillor Coelho explained her rationale for this motion and that more outreach is needed. She recognized Carl Alves, Director of PAACA to address this issue.

Mr. Alves agreed that more outreach was needed in the city as it relates to drug overdoses and substance abuse problems as well. There are a number of approaches available to the city on how to deal with this issue and he was pleased with the appointment of the new Police Chief as Chief Cordeiro is a big proponent of community outreach as it relates to the drug abuse issue in the city. He is also encouraged by a number of new grants that have come to the city and over the next thirty to sixty days a comprehensive plan on how to deal with outreach will be presented citywide. He acknowledged that there are problems out there but there are a lot of programs out there as well and there is a need for the city to synchronize its efforts to help prevent the ongoing drug issue in the city.

Mr. Alves was asked to explain the effect of Narcan and did so by explaining that an opioid is like a gold ball on a tee, when the golf ball is on the golf tee it is a form of euphoria but when the ball falls off the tee you need additional, if not more opioids to meet and restore that euphoria. What Narcan does is fills the void from that opium and forces an overdose victim out of their situation. However, Narcan alone is not the answer, treatment is. Outreach programs are in place to visit an overdose victim at the hospital allowing program representatives to introduce themselves and offer assistance in helping to combat the drug abuse problem the individual is facing. Mr. Alves was asked about the drug Vivatrol, which is new on the market. He said that this type of treatment was very effective and has been keeping people away from use for over an extended period of time. Though the drug has been around for a while it is coming into its own as a tool to help those who want help to recover from drug abuse.

Mr. Alves was asked how receptive are the individuals that the coaching teams go to meet in the hospital in getting them into a program. He explained that about 40 to 60% of overdose victims are willing to talk to a coach. The goal is to build a long-term relationship between the coach and the user. A lot of families who are suffering through the issue as well as the user are talked to and often used as a tool to help persuade the addict to seek help. He went on to explain that currently there are three treatment facilities in the city as well as others throughout Massachusetts. If there aren't any spots available in the local facilities his organization as well as others will look to place those seeking treatment in other facilities throughout the Commonwealth. He also explained that there are a number of other organizations that help in the treatment process from full-time facilities to two-week facilities to step down programs and the like. There is a pretty robust continuum of care in the city. His organization alone sees anywhere between 6 to 7,000 people as it relates to treatment on an annual basis. He went on to say that he is encouraged by the fact that there are more people and organizations that are willing to help than there are addicts in the City of New Bedford, this alone shows that people care and want to help those who want to seek out help.

The Committee thanked Mr. Alves for all that he does in the city in helping to combat drug abuse. Mr. Alves said he wished he could take the credit but he cannot he is just the mouthpiece and there are thousands of people behind him that are working to combat the issue in the city by making treatment available to those who want it.

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

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

This meeting adjourned @ 7:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees