



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: JUNE 17, 2026

TIME: 7:01 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JOSEPH LOPES, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; SHAWN OLIVER; SCOTT PEMBERTON; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES; RYAN PERERIA

Councillor Lopes called the Finance Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read Communications into the record from Councillors Gomes and Choquette explaining their absence and from Councillor Pereira explaining his tardiness. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Oliver, requesting, that the Committee on Finance meet with Chief Financial Officer, Bob Ekstrom, and MAA Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors Sherie Pinzino, to review the current criteria for tax exemption eligibility at age 70 and to consider taking the necessary action to lower the eligibility age to 65; and further, that the Committee on Finance discuss any other exemptions that the City of New Bedford may implement in an effort to assist the City's senior property owners. (Matter ID #1499) (Referred – September 11, 2025.) (March 16, 2026 – tabled)

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To remove the matter from the table.

Sherie Pinzino, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors, was recognized. Councillor Oliver asked her if the Board of Assessors would be in a position to adjust the age for tax exemption from 70 to 65. She stated that they were, once the Council moved to change the wording. He asked if there would need to be an ordinance to initiate the change; he was told one would not be needed. Ms. Pinzino explained that all of the exemption language would remain the same, only the age requirement would change.

Councillor Oliver asked how long it would take for the language to go into effect. He was told once approved, it could be put into effect either July 1 or April 1 for FY2027. He asked if she knew what the current gap between 70 and 65 years olds would be; Ms. Pinzino stated she did not know, but went on to say the overall savings may be in the range of \$200,000.

Councillor Roy asked if it was passed by the Council, would it need to be approved by the Administration. He was told it would not.

Councillor Carney asked what the savings have been over the years for those who were able to use the exemption. She was told \$309,000 in 2026 and \$337,000 in 2025.

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the full City Council that the Board of Assessors change the current eligibility criteria from age 70 to age 65 for City tax exemptions.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #0623) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #0624), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, for the TRANSFER of \$2,099,535.00 from GENERAL STABILIZATION, to SNOW REMOVAL, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$1,933,404.00; PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$101,316.00 and FACILITIES AND FLEET MANAGEMENT, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$64,815.00. (Referred – May 12, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Robert Ekstrom, Chief Financial Officer, who gave an overview of the expenses incurred for snow removal this year. He stated that the entire cost for snow removal, including the purchase of salt as well as repairs for vehicles damaged during plowing, totaled approximately \$2.5 million. However, the current FY26 budget only appropriated \$300,000 for snow removal and related expenses.

Councillor Carney asked if the City would be receiving any reimbursement from the State for snow removal. Mr. Ekstrom stated that he was not aware of any reimbursements from the State. Councillor Abreu noted that the State would be allocating \$100 million to be distributed to communities throughout Massachusetts.

Councillor Burgo stated that the snow reimbursement language was signed by the Governor on Friday, June 12th. It is called the Fair Share Amendment. Councillor Burgo also stated that he had read the City would receive \$713,441.90. He added that the funding could also be applied to potholes and road repairs that were a direct result of the Blizzard of 2026.

Councillor Oliver asked if they could lower the requested amount by \$713,441.90. Mr. Ekstrom cautioned that if the reimbursement funding were not approved, or if it was not received before the end of the fiscal year, the City would end up in a deficit.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the full City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER for the TRANSFER of \$2,099,535.00 from GENERAL STABILIZATION, to SNOW REMOVAL, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$1,933,404.00; PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$101,316.00 and FACILITIES AND FLEET MANAGEMENT, Purchase of Services in the amount of \$64,815.00.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #0797) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #0798), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, for the TRANSFER of \$43,000.00 from PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PERSONAL SERVICES, to MAYOR PERSONAL SERVICES. (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

Neil Mello, Chief of Staff for the Mayor's Office, was recognized. He explained that the amount being requested had been reduced in the budget due to the belief that there was a vacancy, which there was not. This amount needs to be approved, or it will create a budget deficit.

Councillor Burgo agreed the request should be approved, but he cautioned Mr. Mello that there would be a move to reduce the Mayor's staff by one employee this budget cycle. An extensive conversation took place as it related to this comment, which was not germane to the motion before the Committee.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the full City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER for the TRANSFER of \$43,000.00 from PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PERSONAL SERVICES, to MAYOR PERSONAL SERVICES.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1004) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1005), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, for the TRANSFER of \$750,000.00 from INSPECTIONAL SERVICES, Personal Services in the amount of \$110,000.00; FACILITIES AND FLEET, Personal Services in the amount of \$236,000.00; RECREATION AND PARKS, Personal Services in the amount of \$80,000.00; ELECTIONS, Personal Services in the amount of \$88,000.00; HEALTH, Personal Services in the amount of \$120,000.00; SOLICITOR, Personal Services in the amount of \$28,000.00; ZOO, Personal Services in the amount \$43,000.00 and POLICE, Personal Services in the amount \$45,000.00 to CITY UTILITIES, Purchase of Services. (Referred – June 11, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Robert Ekstrom, Chief Financial Officer, who explained that the requested funds were to pay for utility use by the City and throughout the City. Councillor Oliver asked if the budgeted amount had been exhausted. He was told that it had. Mr. Ekstrom stated that this transfer would cover 3/4 off the bill and that his office would be back for the remainder of the funds at the next Council meeting.

Councillor Carney expressed dismay that funds were being transferred from Inspectional Services when the Director is having a hard time employing a full staff.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the full City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER for the TRANSFER of \$750,000.00 from INSPECTIONAL SERVICES, Personal Services in the amount of \$110,000.00; FACILITIES AND FLEET, Personal Services in the amount of \$236,000.00; RECREATION AND PARKS, Personal Services in the amount of \$80,000.00; ELECTIONS, Personal Services in the amount of \$88,000.00; HEALTH, Personal Services in the amount of \$120,000.00; SOLICITOR, Personal Services in the amount of \$28,000.00; ZOO, Personal Services in the amount \$43,000.00 and POLICE, Personal Services in the amount \$45,000.00 to CITY UTILITIES, Purchase of Services.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1010) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1011), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, for the TRANSFER of \$85,000.00 from STABILIZATION FUND, to FACILITIES AND FLEET, Purchase of Services. (Referred – June 11, 2026.)

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the full City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER for the TRANSFER of \$85,000.00 from STABILIZATION FUND, to FACILITIES AND FLEET, Purchase of Services.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the full City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the following matter:

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a request to authorize the City to advertise and employ within the next six months an Associate City Solicitor at M-15, Step 2. (Matter ID #0631) (Referred – May 12, 2026.)

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees