



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: JUNE 23, 2026
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE (7:06); SHANE BURGO; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES (7:02); JOSEPH LOPES; SHAWN OLIVER; SCOTT PEMBERTON; RYAN PEREIRA; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: NO ONE

Councillor Carney called the Appointments & Briefings Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed.

The following matter was taken out of order, without objection.

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of LARA HARRINGTON, New Bedford, MA to the AIRPORT COMMISSION, Ms. Harrington will be replacing Christina E. Cotsoridis, who resigned in January 2025; this term will expire in December 2027. (Matter ID #0894) (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Ms. Harrington, who explained she has been a resident of New Bedford since 2001. Ms. Harrington has raised a family and owned a business in New Bedford for fourteen years. She is currently employed by New Bedford Research Robotics. Ms. Harrington was asked if she would be interested in serving on the Airport Commission, and while she knew there would be a learning curve, she agreed to have her name placed in nomination.

Councillor Abreu asked Ms. Harrington how her business experience would help her if she served on the Airport Commission. She stated that she believed the Airport is positioned for growth and renovation, and that her business acumen would bring a sense of building community through business synergy. She believes the New Bedford Regional Airport is a special asset to the City.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of LARA HARRINGTON, New Bedford, MA to the AIRPORT COMMISSION.

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JUSTIN OHLSON, New Bedford, MA to the WATER BOARD, Mr. Ohlson will be replacing the late Patrick E. Rogers, who resigned in January 2025; this term will expire in April 2027. (Matter ID #0895) (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

The Applicant was not present.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of KREG R. ESPINOLA, New Bedford, MA to the STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY BOARD of GOVERNORS, to fill the seat vacated by Moira Tierney. (Matter ID #0896) (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

Atty. Espinola was recognized and gave an overview of his history with the City, having served as an Assistant City Solicitor for a number of years. Atty. Espinola stated that he has served on various boards, such as the Abolitionist Row Park Development Board and the Rotch-Jones-Duff House. He said that the Mayor had contacted him about a position on the Steamship Authority Board of Governors, and he agreed to serve. He has since met with the head of the Steamship Authority (SSA) to garner a better understanding of how the Board operates. He believes that the service is currently underutilized.

Councillor Pereira asked Atty. Espinola if he would be in a position to attend the SSA meetings. Atty. Espinola replied that it was his understanding that the meetings are held on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM, which would be easy for him to attend.

Councillor Abreu asked how he would be able to sway the majority of the Steamship Authority Board on issues pertaining to the City, where the City only has 10% of the vote on the Board and the majority holders are Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Atty. Espinola answered that he believes his ability to negotiate will be an advantage in terms of representing New Bedford's needs.

Councillor Baptiste asked Atty. Espinola that since he serves on various boards and is involved in children's activities, what the biggest asset would be that he would bring to the Board. Atty. Espinola said that he has a passion for the Port of New Bedford and that the relationship with the SSA is underutilized; he would look to develop an economic relationship with the Islands and believes himself to be a consensus builder.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of KREG R. ESPINOLA, New Bedford, MA to the STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY BOARD of GOVERNORS.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Abreu and Pereira, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings discuss the ongoing construction project on County Street; and further, that the Committee meet with local businesses to discuss the impact of the street disturbances. (Matter ID #0652) (Referred – May 07, 2024.) (July 16, 2024 – tabled)

The Chair recognized Shawn Syde, City Engineer, Department of Public Infrastructure, who provided the Committee with an update on the project. He said the project is a major undertaking of 1 ½ miles of City road, serving a number of City Wards. He reminded the Committee that the MassDOT contribution to this project is a \$12 million investment, consisting of a total of four phases. He added that phase one is almost complete and phase two is progressing, adding sidewalks and ADA ramps. Phase three will be initiated in 2028 and the entire project should be complete, including phase four, by 2030. Once completed, the City will have finalized a \$19 million investment project.

Councillor Lopes expressed concern that the developers are closing entire streets when the agreement was to allow for the passage of traffic to accommodate residents and businesses in the area. Mr. Syde stated that when a Councillor becomes aware of an issue, they should contact his office. He said there are a number of contractors from other entities, such as Eversource, that are working on other projects in the area.

Councillor Gomes asked whether the City was properly addressing any concerns or issues that might arise because of the project. Lisa Sherman of Camp, Dresser, McKee and Smith, Inc., the project consultant for the City, stated that they were being addressed and also provided the Committee with an overview of the installation of lights and other items.

Councillor Baptiste stated that he has also witnessed street closings which have prevented residents from parking in their own driveways during construction. He added that an entire street being closed is affecting trash collection as well.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter at this time.

The following matter was taken out of order, without objection.

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the REAPPOINTMENT of RICARD REZENDES, New Bedford, MA to the LICENSING BOARD this term will expire in June 2032. (Matter ID #0893) (Referred – May 28, 2026.)

Mr. Rezendes was recognized and gave an overview of his qualifications. He is retired from the New Bedford Police Department and currently serves on the Licensing Board, of which he has been the Chairman for the past year. He also provided an update on the Licensing Board's office, which has recently lost an Administrative Clerk, leaving one Clerk to serve both the Health Department and the Licensing Board.

Councillor Burgo expressed concern that the Licensing Board hearings were on Zoom and that people are not always able to attend. He said that from what he has witnessed, the Zoom meetings are chaotic. Mr. Rezendes explained that he was not a fan of Zoom meetings and that future meetings will take place in person. He added that Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) meetings are conducted by the State and are Zoom meetings.

Mr. Rezendes was asked if he would look into changing the way meetings are held, especially when it comes to citizen/abutter input. Mr. Rezendes stated that public input was paramount and that he would look at instituting a speaking platform that would allow for public input for up to three minutes.

Mr. Rezendes was asked what his decision-making process was. He explained that he relies on abutters for their input, complaints and concerns. He also relies on Police reports and calls for service.

Councillor Gomes spoke in support of the reappointment of Mr. Rezendes and asked if he would consider visiting businesses to ensure they are following Licensing Board regulations, as the Board has done in the past. Mr. Rezendes explained that while he was not familiar with that past practice, he would be willing to consider it.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the REAPPOINTMENT of RICARD REZENDES, New Bedford, MA to the LICENSING BOARD.

The following item was severed from "NO FURTHER ACTION" by Councillor Gomes; the matter remains in Committee.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with Berklee College of Music Professor Jackie Santos and Berklee College of Music Vice President of Education Outreach and Social Entrepreneurship Krystal Prime-Banfield for the purpose of discussing, which has been in discussion for some time, locating a Berklee City Music in the City in New Bedford. (Matter ID #1423) (Referred – August 17, 2023.)

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take "**NO FURTHER ACTION**" on the following items:

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes and Markey, requesting, that the City Council go on record in opposition to Parallel Products, Inc., of New England, 100 Duchaine Boulevard, New Bedford, being issued any type of permitting from the City of New Bedford or the Massachusetts Office of Environmental Protection (MEPA) for any recyclable plastics, glass waste or a waste water sludge facility at this location, until company officials hold a meeting with residents of the Pinehill Drive/Phillips Road area and City officials; and further, that Parallel Products, Inc. officials explain how land in the Industrial Business Park was bought or leased for this type of operation; and further, that the company explain to the residents and the City of New Bedford how this operation will not affect the quality of life of the abutting neighborhoods and businesses located in New Bedford Industrial Business Park; and further, that the meeting be held for the convenience of the neighborhood at the Casimir Pulaski School, making it easier for residents who live in the area to attend. (Matter ID #0465) (Referred – March 14, 2019.) (June 12, 2019 – Remain in Committee) (May 17, 2022 – Remain in Committee)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes, Abreu, Markey, Carney, Coelho, Dunn, Giesta, Lima, Lopes, Council President Morad and Councillor Rebeiro, on behalf of the residents and businesses in the immediate area of the New Bedford Business Park, requesting that the City Council go on record as being in opposition to the waste, recycling, trash and sludge facility currently being proposed by Parallel Products of New England, located at 100 Duchaine Blvd; and further, that letters be sent to the Massachusetts Department of Energy & Environmental Affairs and the City of New Bedford's Planning Department, Board of Health, Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Commission, asking that unfavorable recommendations be made concerning this proposal and/or that any permits sought by Parallel Products for this project be denied due to the fact that the location of said business is in very close proximity to a residential area and that the New Bedford Business Park was established and intended for production and hi-tech businesses; furthermore, that letters be sent to Gov. Baker, Sen. Mark Montigny and the City's entire State legislative delegation, Senators Warren and Markey and Congressman Keating expressing the City Council's opposition to any state or federal permitting of this facility; and that letters also be sent to every business located in the Business Park, asking that they join the community and City officials in our firm opposition to this type of industry being located within this area; and finally, that the Committee on Appointments & Briefings meet with all park businesses in order to learn their opinions regarding this proposed project and what impact they foresee it having on the Business Park, the residents and overall quality of life within the area. (To be Adopted, Referred to the Committee on Appointments & Briefings, and that Rule 40 be Waived.) (Matter ID #0797) (Referred – May 09, 2019.) (May 14, 2019 & May 15, 2019 – Letters sent to all parties outlined in motion) (June 12, 2019 – tabled; Committee requests every business owner in the business park be given the opportunity to submit in writing their position on Parallel Products, and whether they are in support or opposition of this type of facility being located within the business park community) (June 27, 2019 – letters sent to all businesses in the business park with info from the June 12, 2019 meeting; to date, one response received.) (May 17, 2022 – Remain in Committee)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Markey, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with Members of South Coast Neighbors United and Attorney Kirstie Pecci, the Director of Conservation Law Foundation's Zero Waste Products, to discuss Phase 1 and 2 of Parallel Products project proposed for the City of New Bedford. (Matter ID #1116) (Referred – August 19, 2021.) (September 30, 2021 – tabled)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, Giesta, Lima, Council President Abreu and Councillor Morad, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings hold a meeting with Officials from Parallel Products, the Mitchell Administration and the City Solicitor for the purpose of explaining the agreement that the City and the Mayor entered into with Parallel Products which allows Mr. Tim Cusson, CEO of Parallel Products to move forward with the construction plan in the New Bedford Business Park; and further, an explanation as to why the residents of Pine Hill and Sassaquin areas were not notified before the signing of this agreement which will affect the quality of life for the residents and businesses in the area for many years to come; and further that the Administration provide the City Council, residents, and business owners in the area, an explanation on how this agreement of receiving \$800,000 a year will benefit the abutting area and the City; and whereas the New Bedford City Council signed onto a letter submitted to MEPA on May 10, 2021 along with Mayor Jon Michell, expressing strong opposition to the establishment of a glass/solid waste/biosolids processing facility to be operated by Parallel Products at 100 Duchaine Boulevard; although changes have been made to the project proposal, the City Council will send a letter expressing our continued opposition to this project in its entirety because of the detrimental impact it would have on the residents, businesses and the community of New Bedford; the City has been subjected to multiple environmental injustices and this project will in fact be another one; and furthermore, the City Council would also like to state its opposition to the City's Host Agreement entered into with Parallel Products, and that the New Bedford City Council was unaware any of agreement, as it was entered into solely by Mayor Jon Mitchell. (Matter ID #1382) (Referred – August 18, 2022.) (October 18, 2022 – tabled)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes and Oliver, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with MBTA South Coast Rail officials for the purpose of discussing the safety of the Purchase Street Train corridor; the installation of safety fencing from Minuteman Car Wash, south and the support wall south on Purchase Street, from Penniman Street to the train station; and further, requesting that the Purchase Street support wall have the same façade as the train station. (Matter ID #0116) (Referred – January 25, 2024.) (June 17, 2025 – tabled) (March 17, 2026 – Remain in Committee)

RELATED MOTION, Councillor Pereira, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with the County Street business owners, Anthony Veilleux of Eversource, Mayor Mitchell, EDC Director Derek Santos, and Director of Tourism Ashley Payne for a discussion regarding past project issues and possible resolutions. (Referred from Committee – July 16, 2024.)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments & Briefings meet with James Marshall, Director of Cable Access, for the purpose of discussing why the Educational Channel was changed from 9 to 96 and why the Government Access Channel was changed from 18 to 97; and further, requesting that Cable Access return the channels to their original listings, as this change has been very troubling to many Cable Access viewers. (Matter ID #0288) (Referred – March 12, 2026.)

Councillor Burgo made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councillor Pereira.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees