



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2026
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; SHANE BURGO; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES; JOSEPH LOPES; SCOTT PEMBERTON; RYAN PEREIRA (7:38); JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR OLIVER

Councillor Carney called the Appointments & Briefings Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read a letter into the record from Councillor Oliver explaining his absence. The Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Lopes.

CITIZEN'S INPUT TIME – Not to exceed the first thirty (30) minutes of the meeting.

a. Kyle Fahey, 59 Shawmut Avenue, speaking on "Excessive Car and Motor Bike Noises". (Referred – July 13, 2026.)

Mr. Fahey was not present.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter.

b. William Lacey, 914 Lucy Street, speaking on "Unsafe Driving by New Bedford Police Officers on Lucy Street". (Referred – July 13, 2026.)

Mr. Lacey was present and addressed the Committee. He provided a brief summary of an incident that occurred in his neighborhood this past summer during which he witnessed unsafe driving by New Bedford Police Officers on Lucy Street.

The matter was concluded.

c. Carmen Norman, 941 Oakley Street, speaking on "Safety Concerns & Traffic Accidents near 5 Nauset Street". (Referred – July 22, 2026.)

Ms. Norman was not present.

On motion be Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter. Ms. Norman will be invited to the Oct. meeting.

d. Catherine Synnott, 12 Ruth Street, speaking on "Excess Number of Storage Facilities in the City". (Referred – July 28, 2026.)

Ms. Synnott contacted the City Council Office to let the members know she couldn't attend and asked to be added to the next meeting agenda.

e. Brian Santerre, 173 Eugenia Street, speaking on "Illegal Parking of Commercial Vehicles with USDOT Numbers". (Referred – July 30, 2026.)

Mr. Santerre contacted the City Council Office to let the members know he couldn't attend and asked to be added to the next meeting agenda.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To take the following matter out of order without objection; and remove from the table.

COMMUNICATION, Councillor Gomes, submitting a Host Community Agreement Proposal Application on behalf of Shamar James, Founder/CEO of THConnect, LLC, dba Houz of Diesel, seeking to operate a co-located adult-use marijuana retail and product manufacturing establishment at 301 Herman Melville Boulevard, New Bedford, MA 02740. (Matter ID #0116) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 18, 2025 – tabled) (September 16, 2025 – tabled w/ a RELATED MOTION that a letter be sent to CCC staff asking why they did not attend the meeting and request that the Mayor reconvene the HCA Screening Committee as soon as possible.) (November 18, 2025 – tabled) (December 09, 2025 – tabled w/ a RELATED MOTION that a letter be sent to the Mayor asking him to enter into a Host Community Agreement (HCA) with the Houz of Diesel enabling the organization to seek reimbursement from the State for funds previously expended.) (February 17, 2026 – tabled)

Atty. Eric Jaikes, City Solicitor, was recognized and provided the Committee with an update on the application. Atty. Jaikes explained that the proposal is moving forward. The HCA Screening Committee met to review the proposal and identified several technical issues that needed to be addressed. Those issues were submitted to the applicant, who subsequently provided responses. Atty. Jaikes indicated that he expects the proposal to come before the Committee for a vote in the near future. He also stated that he intends to support the plan, as he considers it to be a very solid proposal.

Councillor Baptiste asked how the applicant's submission addressed the Committee's requirements. Atty. Jaikes stated that the submission was very thorough.

Shamar James, Founder/CEO of THConnect, LLC, dba Houz of Diesel, and Connie Souza, representing the business, were recognized. They confirmed that the process was moving forward and expressed their appreciation to the Council for its assistance in helping to move the process along.

Councillor Baptiste asked whether the questions submitted by the Screening Committee were issues that could potentially shift the project away from the applicants. Mr. James replied that they were not. He expressed confidence that the project would be successful.

Councillor Gomes acknowledged that this has been a lengthy process and expressed his satisfaction that it is moving forward. The Councillor suggested that the item be tabled until the applicant receives official notification from the Host Community Agreement Screening Committee.

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

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of BRIAN J. SOUSA, New Bedford, MA to the ELECTION COMMISSION; this term will expire April 2029. (Matter ID #1299) (Referred – August 20, 2026.)

Mr. Brian J. Souza was recognized and noted that his name was spelled incorrectly, with an "S" instead of a "Z" in Souza. The Clerk stated that the error would be noted and corrected. Mr. Souza then provided an overview of his background and experience. He is a lifelong resident of New Bedford and has served the City in several capacities, including as an Auxiliary Police Officer, Civil Defense member, EMT, and Police Officer. He later served with the Sheriff's Department and is a former pastor of the United Methodist Church.

Councillor Burgo asked Mr. Souza how he came to know of the open position and, if he was appointed, whether he would consider himself accountable to the Mayor or to the citizens of New Bedford. Mr. Souza stated that he is a member of the local Republican Committee and that the position was brought to his attention by the Chair of the Committee, who recommended him for the position. He also stated that he would be loyal to the people of New Bedford.

Councillor Baptiste asked Mr. Souza why he chose to serve on the Election Commission. He stated that he is a firm believer in election integrity and that it is important to ensure that the citizens of New Bedford have confidence when they go to vote and have no doubt that their vote is being counted.

Councillor Abreu asked Mr. Souza what ideas he may have for increasing voter participation in off-year municipal elections. He stated that voter education is important and noted that, during the last municipal election he participated in, only 64 ballots had been cast in his ward by the time he went to vote late in the day.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of BRIAN SOUSA, New Bedford, MA to the ELECTION COMMISSION.

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) (June 23, 2026 – tabled)

RELATED MOTION, Councillor Pereira, requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with the County Street business owners, a Representative from MassDOT, Mayor Mitchell, DPI Commissioner Jamie Ponte, State Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral, and State Senator Mark C. Montigny for a discussion regarding future projects, including the upcoming TIP project, and possible issues that may arise. (Referred from Committee – July 16, 2024.)

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

Mr. Jim Costa, Superintendent of Wastewater, was recognized and provided an update on the construction project. The project is currently in Phase Two, which includes County Street from Rivet Street to Allen Street. Utility work is complete, and crews are finishing the sidewalks. This phase is expected to be completed by the end of the fall season. The area will be fully cleaned up before the winter break.

Councillor Pereira asked whether the project was on schedule and was told that it was. He further asked that the street lines be painted more effectively when the work is completed, noting that the lines in the Phase One area faded quickly.

Councillor Baptiste asked that the contractors be mindful of the residents living in the area. He stated that he has received calls from residents who have been unable to leave their homes, access their driveways, or put out their trash due to the construction.

Councillor Lopes asked that, whenever possible, at least one lane of traffic remain open during construction. He also requested that the portable restrooms (Port-a-Jons) be removed during the winter months, noting that there were several incidents involving snowplows last winter.

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

COMMUNICATION, Councillors Pereira, Abreu and Gomes, submitting a PETITION from residents of the South End of the City of New Bedford related to the sewage treatment facility located on South Rodney French Boulevard. (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments & Briefings, the Department of Public Infrastructure, the Administration, and the State Delegation.) (Matter ID #1584) (Referred – September 26, 2024.) (October 15, 2024 – tabled) (May 20, 2025 – tabled) (May 19, 2026 – tabled)

RELATED MOTION, Councillors Pereira and Gomes, requesting, the Administration and the Office of Environmental Stewardship meet with the Committee on Appointments and Briefings to discuss whether a company can be hired to conduct an odor analysis in the South End of the City; and further, to report to this Committee the amount spent on said analysis and provide a timeline of the study and data once the analysis is concluded. (Referred from Committee – October 15, 2024.) (May 20, 2025 – tabled) (May 19, 2026 – tabled)

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

Mr. Jim Costa addressed the Committee to provide an update on this issue. He provided an overview of the department's response to odor concerns in the neighborhood. He explained that DPI responds to each complaint received, whether it is made by phone or submitted through the City's M311 reporting system.

Councillor Abreu, the Chair of the Special Committee on Environmental Affairs, stated that he intends to also look into the issue through his committee. He asked whether the logs maintained by the City and Veolia, the company that operates the plant, include complaints received by phone, text, and through M311. He was told that they do.

Ms. Wendy Morrill and Ms. Tracy Wallace of South Coast Neighbors United were recognized and expressed concern that some odor complaints were coming from outside the City. They also requested that DPI include records of all complaints made directly to Veolia, in addition to those reported to the City.

Councillor Abreu asked them whether there had been a response from the Department of Public Health (DPH). He was told that DPH had not yet responded and that they did not expect to be contacted.

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

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Carney, Gomes, Abreu, Oliver, Council President Morad and Councillors Giesta and Markey, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with Wendy Morrill from the South Coast Neighbors United organization and Stephanie Sloan, Director of the Health Department, to speak on the South Coast Renewables, LLC (formerly known as “Parallel Products of New England”) project being proposed for the City of New Bedford. (Matter ID #1191) (Referred – June 22, 2023.) (July 18, 2023 – tabled) (June 17, 2025 – tabled)

Wendy Morrill provided an update on the matter, including its current status in the courts. She explained that a bus trip had been organized, during which several individuals spoke, including representatives from the City, the Board of Health, and state legislators. They were asked questions, by the judge, regarding several issues and sought clarification from both sides. The hearing lasted approximately one hour, which Ms. Morrill was told was unusually long for this type of proceeding. She further reported that a decision is expected by October 23rd, although it could take longer.

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

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take “**NO FURTHER ACTION**” on the following matters:

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, Carney, Lima, Morad and Markey requesting, that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with the potential developers of two homes located in New Bedford Historical Districts, one at 52 Ash Street and the other at 110 Hawthorn Street; the Ash Street residence was sold to Caldeira, LLC for the potential location of a 21-person rooming house; the Hawthorn Street residence is owned by Jeff A. White of D.W. White Construction, Acushnet, MA, who is negotiating a lease with Fellowship Health Resources (a Rhode Island based company) for a seven-person rooming house; and further, requesting that the owners of both locations attend a meeting to provide detailed plans to the Committee; and further, requesting that representatives of the New Bedford Preservation Society and WHALE (Waterfront Historic Area League) also be invited to attend said meeting, along with residents located within a six-block area; the integrity of the neighborhood’s single-family homes is at stake, homes that have been preserved for their historical significance and whaling heritage. (Matter ID #1412) (Referred – August 17, 2023.) (September 19, 2023 – RELATED MOTION re potential ordinance amendment, referred to Ordinance Committee; main motion tabled)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Pereira, Carney, Baptiste, Markey and Abreu, requesting that the Committee on Appointments and Briefings meet with the New Bedford Port Authority, a representative of Vineyard Wind, a representative of MassCEC, and local business owners to discuss the parking situation in the neighborhood surrounding the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal. (Matter ID #1531) (Referred – September 14, 2023.) (October 23, 2023 – tabled) (March 18, 2024 – tabled)

Councillor Roy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councillor Abreu.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees