



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2026
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

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

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR DEREK BAPTISTE

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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 Communication into the record from Councillor Baptiste explaining his tardiness in arriving at the meeting. The Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo.

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

- 1a. Annette Saulnier, 29 Ashley Street, Apt. 2S, New Bedford, MA, 02744, speaking on the "Homeless and Housing Situation in New Bedford". (Referred – December 12, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Annette Saulnier, 29 Ashley Street, Apt. 2S, New Bedford, MA, 02740, who spoke on the Homeless and Housing situation in New Bedford.

The matter was concluded.

- 1b. Allen Ganeto, 415 County Street, Apt. 105, New Bedford, MA, 02740, speaking on the "former Cape Verdean Youth Athletic Association". (Referred – January 06, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Allen Ganeto, 415 County Street, New Bedford, MA, 02740, who spoke about the reopening of the former Cape Verdean Youth Athletic Association.

The matter was concluded.

- 1c. Christopher Lamontagne, 236 Hemlock Street, Apt. 2S, New Bedford, MA, 02740, speaking on the "The Effects of Social Sanctioning". (Referred – January 16, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Christopher Lamontagne, 236 Hemlock Street, Apt. 2S, New Bedford, MA 02740, who spoke about the Effects of Social Sanctioning.

The matter was concluded.

- 1d. Kevin Mello, 236 Hemlock Street, New Bedford, MA, 02740, speaking on “Public Records Documentation Facts”. (Referred – January 16, 2026.)

It was determined that the speaker, Mr. Kevin Mello, was not present.

Citizen’s Input Time was concluded.

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PUBLIC HEARING, CONTINUED, on an APPLICATION, Laguerre Pierre Marc, d/b/a L and S Transport, Inc., for a SPECIAL PERMIT for Motor Vehicle Sales and/or Rentals & General Repair, at 724 Ashley Boulevard, New Bedford, MA 02745. (Application Received – November 05, 2025.) (Duly advertised in The Standard-Times on Tuesday, December 02, 2025 and Tuesday, December 09, 2025.) (December 16, 2025 – Public Hearing continued to Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.)

The Chair Continued the Public Hearing on the APPLICATION, Laguerre Pierre Marc, d/b/a L and S Transport, Inc., for a SPECIAL PERMIT for MOTOR VEHICLE SALES and/or RENTALS and GENERAL REPAIR, at 724 Ashley Boulevard, New Bedford, MA 02740.

Mr. Laguerre Pierre Marc was recognized. He stated that he had a similar business in Bridgewater and has relocated to New Bedford. Mr. Marc wants to establish a used car lot and conduct minor repairs on the property. He spoke about the number of repairs he has paid for to date.

A question was asked if the property was in a position to allow for auto repairs.

The Chair recognized Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner, Department of Inspectional Services, who was asked if the applicant could conduct auto repairs on the property in question. Mr. Romanowicz replied that it was his understanding that the building did not have an MDC trap and therefore he would be unable to do auto repairs until such a trap was installed.

Councillor Lopes suggested the Committee could condition the approval to allow for auto sales only until such time that an MDC trap was installed.

Councillor Gomes stated that the applicant had informed him that the building did have an MDC trap. Commissioner Romanowicz stated that no such trap was on file with the City. Councillor Gomes asked if the City had inspected the building to determine whether or not an MDC trap existed. Commissioner Romanowicz said the City had not done so. The Building Department could inspect the property, and if an MDC trap was found, the Department of Public Infrastructure would have to test it to guarantee it is in working order.

Councillor Oliver echoed the same suggestion as Councillor Lopes. When there was a working MDC trap, then they could grant the General Repair portion of the permit.

Councillor Lopes asked Attorney David Gerwatowski, Legal Counsel, if the Committee could condition the granting of the permit to once the MDC trap was confirmed, the applicant could return to the Committee and then be granted a General Repair Permit. Atty. Gerwatowski stated this was possible.

Councillor Pereira asked if the Committee could grant the application in its entirety adding language that made the repairs possible contingent upon confirmation of a working MDC trap. Attorney Gerwatowski said that was possible as well. He suggested that the Public Hearing be closed and then the Committee could make whatever recommendations they deemed necessary.

The Chair asked if there was any one present who wished to speak and/or be recorded in favor of the application. There were none.

The Chair asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak and/or be recorded in opposition to the application. There were none.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To close the Public Hearing.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: to recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the SPECIAL PERMIT, provided that the Committee receives a communication from the Building Commissioner by the February 26, 2026, City Council meeting. The General Repair portion of the Special Permit would be Approved at that meeting.

Councillor Burgo asked for the floor, he stated that he believed that this was an unnecessary step to take. Not only did the Council have the safety net to find out if the MDC trap is in the building before the City Council meeting of February 26th, but the matter would still have to go before the Licensing Board for approval. The Licensing Board could make sure the MDC trap was in place before approving the applicant's Special Permit to operate.

Councillor Gomes withdrew his second.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: to recommend APPROVAL of the APPLICATION, Laguerre Pierre Marc, d/b/a L and S Transport, Inc., for a SPECIAL PERMIT for MOTOR VEHICLE SALES and/or RENTALS and GENERAL REPAIR, at 724 Ashley Boulevard, New Bedford, MA 02740. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 8, Nays 2; Councillors Carney and Lopes OPPOSED.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of CRISTOBAL JOSE ESCOBAR, New Bedford, MA to the VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD, replacing Christopher Holkamp who has resigned; this term will expire December 2026. (Matter ID #1925) (Referred – December 11, 2025.)

The Chair asked if Mr. Escobar was present. It was determined that he was not.

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

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JEFFREY DAVID FOISY, New Bedford as a CONSTABLE. (Matter ID #1931) (Referred – December 11, 2025.) and AN APPLICATION, (Matter ID #1932) (Referred – December 11, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Mr. Jeffrey David Foisy who said he is a lifelong resident of New Bedford. Mr. Foisy said he has coached girls' softball for the past eighteen years and currently serves as a technician in the City. He wants to be a process server in the City.

Councillor Oliver asked if he would be working with someone as a Constable. Mr. Foisy said he would. He also informed the Committee that he currently serves as a Constable in the Town of Fairhaven.

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of JEFFREY DAVID FOISY, New Bedford, MA as a CONSTABLE.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of DANIEL LUIS REYES ORTIZ, New Bedford, MA as a CONSTABLE. (Matter ID #0016) (Referred – January 08, 2026.) and AN APPLICATION, (Matter ID #0017) (Referred – January 08, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Mr. Daniel Luis Reyes Ortiz who explained he is lifelong resident of New Bedford and is currently employed by the City at the Department of Public Infrastructure. He stated that he has a number of family members who have served or are currently serving as Police Officers in the City. He wants to be a Constable to work with other members of his family that currently serve as Constables.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of DANIEL LUIS REYES ORTIZ, New Bedford, MA as a CONSTABLE.

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PETITION, Ksea Swift and Justin Swift, East Freetown, MA d/b/a SWIFT SALES, 127 West Rodney French Boulevard, New Bedford, MA, requesting a Waiver of Residency in accordance with Section 15-38 of the City Code, to obtain a **LICENSE TO DEAL IN JUNK, OLD METALS OR ANY OTHER SECONDHAND ARTICLES.** (Matter ID #1797) (Referred – November 13, 2025.) (December 16, 2025 – Remain in Committee)

The applicants were not present.

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

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COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, submitting an Application for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE**, on behalf of Celestin Wilkend, 1 Warwick Street, New Bedford, MA d/b/a **CRIS TRANSPORTATION**, 1 Warwick Street, New Bedford, MA. (**License to expire – June 30, 2026.**) (Matter ID #0033) (Referred – January 08, 2026.)

The applicant was not present.

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

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COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, submitting an Application for a **NEW PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE** on behalf of Suzete Rosa DePina, d/b/a **TIA SUZETE TRANSPORTATION**, 38 Trinity Street, New Bedford, MA. (**License to Expire - June 30, 2026.**) (Matter ID #0116) (Referred – January 22, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Ms. Suzete Rosa DePina, 38 Trinity Street, New Bedford, MA, who through an interpreter, Tre Uwizeye, explained that she has worked in the transportation business in the past and wants to operate her own business which will transport children to and from school and hospital/doctor office visits.

Councillor Lopes said the application states Ms. DePina will operate two vehicles. Councillor Lopes asked where would these two vehicles be parked when not in use? He was told that the applicant has a driveway.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: to recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPLICATION for a NEW PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE, on behalf of Suzete Rosa DePina, d/b/a TIA SUZETE TRANSPORTATION, 38 Trinity Street, New Bedford, MA. **(License to Expire - June 30, 2026.)**

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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.)

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To remove this matter from the Table.

Councillor Gomes asked Shamar James, Founder, CEO of THConnect, LLC d/b/a Houz of Diesel to provide the Committee with an update. Mr. James explained that the process was now moving forward. The City has accepted their application and payment. He went on to state that the submission process for the Host Community Agreement (HCA) will continue throughout May. Then the application would be reviewed. Mr. James said that this is a good step for his entity as it has been over two years of waiting.

Councillor Gomes asked if the applicant felt comfortable to which he said he did. Mr. James also stated that his entity would be holding another outreach meeting closer to the time of the application process closing to keep the issue fresh.

Councillor Gomes asked City Solicitor Jaikes what else the applicant would need to do to move the process forward. Solicitor Jaikes stated that he was aware that the application and payment had been received and that at present there was one other entity that planned to submit an application for consideration. Solicitor Jaikes informed the Committee that the submission period was open until May 15th.

Councillor Oliver asked how long it would take from the closing of the submission period to the Committee meeting to recommend approval of a Host Community Agreement. Solicitor Jaikes said he was not sure and was not comfortable speaking on behalf of the Committee. He did state he believed it would be fairly quick, but he could not speculate.

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

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These two following items were taken up together.

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Abreu, Oliver, Lopes, Choquette and Carney, requesting, that a representative from the New Bedford Board of Health or the New Bedford Health Department appear before the Committee on Appointments & Briefings to discuss the Board's recent vote to adopt a new Cigar Minimum Pricing Regulation, effective January 1, 2025, which restricts the sale of tobacco and nicotine delivery products; and further, that the Committee on Appointments & Briefings also hear from local business owners in the City of New Bedford who retail cigars to discuss the potential economic impacts this may have on their industry. (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments & Briefings, the New Bedford Health Department, the Administration, a representative of the New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association, and local New Bedford-based convenience, liquor, cigar and retail business community.) (Matter ID #0114) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 18, 2025 – tabled) and NEW BEDFORD TOBACCO REGULATIONS, (Matter ID #0115) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 18, 2025 – tabled)

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Morad, Abreu, Giesta, Oliver, Gomes, Choquette, Lopes, Carney and Baptiste, requesting, that the City of New Bedford Board of Health immediately rescind the recently approved Cigar Minimum Pricing Regulation that was implemented on January 1, 2025 for an eighteen (18) month period; and further, that the New Bedford Board of Health seek additional grant funding to allow the Health Department Sanitarians to continue their efforts in education of the City's youth regarding the dangers of tobacco and nicotine product use and to increase the Health Department's ability to police City's retail establishments that are legally selling tobacco and nicotine products; and further, that representatives of the New Bedford Board of Health appear before the Committee on Appointments & Briefings in six (6) months, twelve (12) months and eighteen (18) months to update the Committee regarding their efforts of education and policing. (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments & Briefings and the Board of Health.) (Matter ID #0230) (Referred – February 27, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Stephanie Sloan, Director of Public Health, who gave an overview of the number of underage tobacco sales in the City in 2025. She said there was a total of 17 sales with 153 attempts equating to approximately 11% of underage sales. There were 6 cigarette sales, 7 cigar/cigarillo sales and 4 nicotine patch sales.

Councillor Burgo asked if the Board of Health rejected the Council's request to rescind the Cigar Minimum Pricing Regulation. He was told that the Board of Health did reject the request.

Councillor Lopes expressed concern about the wording of the Cigar Minimum Pricing Regulation, specifically Section number 10. Neither Ms. Sloan nor Atty. Jaikes were in a position to address how the wording was developed. It was suggested that Councillor Lopes submit his questions and concerns to the City Solicitor's Office and Atty. Jaikes would have the Solicitor who created the language respond to his concerns.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To table both matters at this time. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 7, Nays 3; Councillors Abreu, Burgo and Roy OPPOSED.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees