CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2026
TIME: 7:01 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JOSEPH LOPES, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; LEO CHOQUETTE (7:31); SHAWN OLIVER; SCOTT PEMBERTON; RYAN PEREIRA; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE; BRIAN GOMES

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 three Communications into the record from Councillors Baptiste, Choquette and Gomes explaining their absences. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Pemberton.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1535) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1536), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the WATER ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $25,388.75. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Jamie Ponte, Commissioner, Department of Public Infrastructure, who noted that the invoices before the committee were received after the previous fiscal year had ended. The invoices still needed to be paid, and they were advised to submit them for payment under the FY27 budget. This invoice was for electrical work completed in February 2026, and the invoice was issued once the work was finished.

Councillor Burgo expressed concern about the twelve requests pending and that he understood additional late invoices were expected to come before the committee. He asked whether the invoice amount had increased since the work was initially secured and was told that it had not.

The Chair recognized Quillan Lowney, City Auditor. Councillor Lopes asked why requests to pay invoices from the previous fiscal year have become more common over the past two years, noting that these expenses should have been accounted for when the City set the tax rate. Mr. Lowney explained that most departments had the funds available but received the invoices too late to encumber the payments in the previous fiscal year.

Councillor Lopes expressed concern that the Council was not informed during the budget process about the expected deficit or the lack of encumbered funds for previously approved expenses. He noted that this creates a double cut for departments that already received FY27 budget reductions, as paying these outstanding invoices would further reduce their available funds.

Mr. Lowney stated that steps are being taken to remind department heads of the importance of submitting invoices within the appropriate fiscal year to prevent this from happening in the future.

On a motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the WATER ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $25,388.75.

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COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1537) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1538), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $1,011.96. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

Commissioner Ponte explained that the invoice was for the uniform cleaning Company that the Department of Infrastructure utilizes. Due to several issues with the company, payment was delayed. Once the issues were resolved, the invoice was submitted for payment, but FY26 had already ended.

Councillor Pereira asked when the services were rendered. The Commissioner explained that the work was completed before the end of FY26, but payment was delayed until the issues were resolved. Councillor Pereira then asked whether the department was tracking invoices to ensure timely payment and avoid delays into the next fiscal year. The Commissioner confirmed that it was.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $1,011.96.

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The following three items were taken up together without objection:

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1539) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1540), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $3,593.00. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1541) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1542), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $2,360.43. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1543) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1544), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $148.30. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

Commissioner Ponte explained that the first item under the Department of Public Infrastructure Purchase of Services was an invoice for parts needed to repair a John Deere unit. The second item, under Supplies, was for an invoice mailed to the Rural Cemetery office, which is no longer used, and discovered late. The third item, also under Supplies, was an invoice for greenhouse supplies received after July 1, 2026.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $3,593.00.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $2,360.43.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $148.30.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1545) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1546), Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the ZOO PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $833.53. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Shara Rapoza, Director of Zoological Services, who explained that the request was for laboratory services performed before the July 1st deadline. The invoices were sent directly to Accounts Payable, attached to a statement, and ultimately went missing. Moving forward, arrangements have been made to have all invoices sent directly to her attention.

Councillor Burgo asked whether the Director knew the services were performed in June. She confirmed that she did but explained that billing varies depending on the type of laboratory test. For example, cultures can take time to grow, and invoices are not issued until testing is complete. Councillor Burgo then asked whether the Zoological Society could have paid the invoice. The Director confirmed that it could have, but the deadline for payment through the Society had already passed.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the ZOO PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $833.53.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1547) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1548), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the LIBRARY SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $469.26. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Olivia Melo, Library Director, who explained that the invoice was for a newspaper subscription account. The original invoice had been discarded unknowingly by staff, and when it was received again, FY26 had already closed.

Councillor Burgo asked whether the billing was monthly and, if so, whether the July bill should have fallen within the regular fiscal year. Director Melo explained that newspaper companies had changed their annual subscription billing to monthly payments. If payment is not received in the required month, the amount is added to the current month's bill as a prorated charge. She added that the department had contacted the vendor to discuss how to prevent this issue from happening again.

On a motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the LIBRARY SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $469.26.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1549) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1550), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the CABLE ACCESS ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $110.23. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

The Chair recognized James Marshall, Station Manager, who explained that the invoice was for the July dumpster pickup. Winn Waste typically sends invoices during the first week of each month, but due to the Fourth of July weekend, this invoice arrived a week later than usual.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the CABLE ACCESS ENTERPRISE FUND PURCHASE OF SERVICES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $110.23.

COMMUNICATION (Matter ID #1551) and AN ORDER (Matter ID #1552), submitted by Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the AIRPORT ENTERPRISE FUND SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $103.84. (Referred – September 24, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Scot Servis, Airport Manager, who explained that the invoice was for an Amazon purchase that was ordered before the end of the fiscal year but shipped later. The charge was processed upon shipment, after FY26 had closed.

On a motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER to provide for the payment of unpaid bills of a previous Fiscal Year of the City of New Bedford, the sum set against the AIRPORT ENTERPRISE FUND SUPPLIES is hereby approved to be expended in FISCAL YEAR 2027 in the amount of $103.84.

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On motion by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To follow the Chair's recommendation to waive the reading and take **"NO FURTHER ACTION"** on the following items. The items are as follows:

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Abreu and Lopes, requesting that Chief Financial Officer Bob Ekstrom and representatives of the Mitchell Administration provide the City Council with a detailed accounting of the City's planned allocation and use of the $713,441.91 received through the Commonwealth's Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP), awarded to New Bedford based on its 269.48 miles of locally owned roadway; and further, that the Administration indicate whether these funds will be utilized to offset FY2026 snow and ice expenditures, reduce any existing snow and ice deficit, replenish previously appropriated municipal funds, support amortization efforts authorized under Chapter 101 of the Acts of 2026, or be allocated for another authorized purpose, and provide the anticipated fiscal impact on the City's FY2027 budget and tax rate. (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance, the Mitchell Administration and Chief Financial Officer Ekstrom). (Matter ID #1219) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

COMMUNICATION, Councillor Abreu, submitting a communication from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue/Division of Local Services, regarding the FY2026 Snow and Ice Removal Deficit and Special Accounting Treatment for Commonwealth Reimbursement. (Matter ID #1220) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees