

**NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS**  
**DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2022**  
**TIME: 7:01 P.M.**  
**PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, CHAIRMAN; SHANE BURGO, VICE CHAIRMAN; NAOMI CARNEY; SCOTT LIMA; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY; LINDA MORAD; RYAN PEREIRA**

**ABSENT: COUNCILLORS IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA**

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Councillor Gomes called the Public Safety & Neighborhoods Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Abreu, Baptiste, Dunn and Giesta, explaining their absences from this meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Carney and seconded by Councillor Pereira.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Pereira, requesting that Thomas Anderson, Superintendent of New Bedford Public Schools, come before the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods to discuss the In Force911 program (Ref'd 06/23/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Pereira. (1)

Councillor Pereira explained his motion was filed because he has been researching a first response program called In Force911. It is an APP that is loaded down to police officers, first responders and teachers and school administrators that can be used live an intime with emergency events, such as a live shooter in school systems. He has a friend in another community where they are currently using this program. He said the program had a relatively low-price tag of \$40,000. He told the Committee that he believes while it is not the be all and end all of protection, it could be another tool that may be used to protect students.

Thomas Anderson, School Superintendent declined the invitation to attend this meeting and there was no representative from the School Department, so Councillor Pereira asked New Bedford Police Chief Paul Oliveira to make comments on his suggestion.

Police Chief Oliveira told the Committee that he was aware of the APP and explained there are several similar APPS out there as well. He believes that the calling of 911 is the best option as well as the installation of cameras throughout schools. He cited Keith Middle School as an example. He recently did a review and walk through of the camera system newly installed at the school and found the camera system to be an amazing tool.

The Committee asked what type of security/internal system Voc-Tech had in place and Councillor Pereira told them it was In Force 911.

The Committee asked who is primarily responsible for school protection and security. The Chief explained that while it is multi layered, the primary responsibility of protecting students and faculty falls to the School Department.

Councillor Lima suggested the creation of an Assistant Superintendent of School Security and Safety.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter for sixty (60) days, and that letters be sent to the Superintendent of Schools and the Chief of Police to attend another Public Safety & Neighborhoods Committee meeting to further review this matter. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Item number three (3) was taken out of order without objection.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that an amendment to Section 1 of the Home Rule Petition with the State, regarding the Appointment of Special Police Officers in the City of New Bedford, the change of the wording is Chapter 32 of the general law it should read: "No retired Police Officer shall be eligible for an appointment of a Special Police Officer if the applicant has attained the age of 70 and any Officer so appointed shall be terminated upon attaining the age of 70"; this is a home rule petition amendment to enable New Bedford Police Officers over the age of 65 the ability to be assigned to detail work in the City in New Bedford (To be Referred to the Mayor, the Police Chief, our local State Delegation and the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods.) (Ref'd 08/18/2022) (09/06/2022 – Returned Unsigned by the Mayor) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Carney. (3)

Councillor Gomes explained that this motion was forwarded to the Committee because he had heard from a few retired officers who are at the age of 70 and by the language under Chapter 33 of MGL, no retired officer shall be eligible to serve as a special police officer. Currently, retired officers can serve as special police officers over the age of 65 to 70 as detail officers in the city. Councillor Gomes said he would like to have the language changed so that those who are 70 or older would still be able to participate in police details if needed.

Police Chief Paul Oliveira explained that he is currently looking at another program other communities have instituted that would allow for retired police officers and civilians, if trained, the ability to work details in the city beyond the age of 70. The Chief went on to explain that there is a very real need for detail officers in the city. The current police compliment does not allow many officers to work details. This program he believes would be the solution to a very real problem. He asked for time to go over the particulars and report back to the Committee.

Alves Medeiros of State Representative Tony Cabral's office was present and stated that the Representatives office would consider anything that the city or the Committee sent to his attention. The same went for Steve Tedeschi, Legislative Aide, representing Representative Hendricks' office.

Councillor Morad mentioned that other communities such as Dartmouth and Freetown have extended the age requirement.

The Committee asked the Chief to continue to investigate the program he has spoken of and report back to the Committee. He was agreeable to this.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter for sixty (60) days. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Items four (4) and five (5) were taken up together and out of order without objection.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with the DPI Commissioner Ponte or a representative for the purpose of discussing the installation of LED lights and removing the single bulbs in areas that continue to be high risk for criminal activity throughout the City; and further requesting that when the City replaces an existing LED light bulb that it be replaced with a newer LED bulb not continue to use the older type bulbs; furthermore that in the Committee meeting we discuss lighting across the City. (To be Referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods and the Department of Public Infrastructure.) (Ref'd 07/16/2020) (10/14/2020 – minutes requested from the Siemens meeting that led the Council to approve funding for LED lights; tabled) (10/23/2020 – original work orders and service agreement pertaining to this matter submitted by Scott Durkee, Energy Director) (4)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To follow the Chair's suggestion and waive the reading and refer out to the City Council recommending "No Further Action" on this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with Energy Manager Scott Durkee and DPI Commissioner Jamie Ponte, to discuss the present lighting situation in some New Bedford areas; and further that they make available to the City Council the cost savings with changing the street lights, why every neighborhood did not receive LED lighting and the cost savings using the single bulb fixtures and bulb replacements instead of the LED light strips; also provide the Council with how much money has been saved due to the solar farms that have been placed around the City, the reason for this request comes on the heels of asking that LED lighting to be replaced in high crime areas throughout the City. (Ref'd 08/20/2020) (10/14/2020 – tabled) (5)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To follow the Chair's suggestion and waive the reading and refer out to the City Council recommending "No Further Action" on this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Gomes called for a recess at 7:32 pm. The Committee came out of recess at 7:35 pm.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Pereira and Gomes, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet in executive session pursuant to exemption #4 of the Open Meeting Law ("To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto,") for the purpose of exploring with the Administration and Police Department the availability of certain security equipment and/or other devices that may not be currently provided that could serve to provide enhanced security (Ref'd 06/23/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (2)

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To enter into 'Executive Session' for the purpose of discussing the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto, for the purpose of exploring with the Administration and Police Department the availability of certain security equipment and/or other devices that may not be currently provided that could serve to provide enhanced security; and further that at the completion of this discussion the Committee will not reconvene, but will adjourn in Executive Session. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 0.

This meeting adjourned in Executive Session @ 8:15 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,  
Clerk of Committees