



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: DECEMBER 09, 2025
TIME: 6:52 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIR; IAN ABREU;
DEREK BAPTISTE; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY;
MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SHAWN OLIVER;
RYAN PERERIA

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS LEO CHOQUETTE; JOSEPH LOPES

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Councillor Morad called the Finance 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 Choquette explaining his absence. The Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo. The Clerk also announced that Councillor Lopes communicated to him that he would not be in attendance for this meeting.

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lopes and Morad, requesting, that Derek Santos, Executive Director of the New Bedford Economic Development Council, provide to the Committee on Finance the annual program report detailing the status of the City of New Bedford Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Tax Assessments (STA) and Tax Increment Exemption (TIE) activity for all active certified projects. (Matter ID #0229) (Referred – February 27, 2025.) (May 12, 2025 – tabled w/ a RELATED MOTION that the Solicitor's Office provide the Committee with an updated SOP on how TIFs/STAs will be processed based on the changes made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Office of Business Development.) (September 18, 2025 – tabled 30 days) (October 16, 2025 – tabled) (November 19, 2025 – remain on the table)

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To remove from the table.

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the following documents submitted by the New Bedford Economic Development Council (EDC) and/or the Solicitor's Office:

- TIF Policy
- TIF Application
- TIF Agreement
- TIF Compliance Report
- TIF Standard Operating Procedure

The Chair recognized Atty. Peter Winters, Associate City Solicitor, and asked him to provide the Committee with a synopsis of the information provided. Atty. Winters stated that the new document provided was the Standard Operating Policy (SOP) for the City's TIF program, which would be used moving forward now that the State has relinquished much of its duties to municipalities. What the Committee has before them is how the policy will be handled and enforced. The Chair asked if the Solicitor's Office worked collaboratively with the CFO, Assessor's Office and EDC in drafting the SOP. Atty. Winters confirmed that they did.

The Chair recognized Derek Santos, Executive Director for the Economic Development Council. Councillor Pereria asked now that the SOP and other documents have been approved, would he be reaching out to the three businesses that were interested in applying for TIFs in order to move the process forward. Mr. Santos explained that they had not yet reached out because the matter was tabled at the last Committee meeting; they were waiting for the item to pass in Committee before reaching out. Now that the item is moving forward, his office would indeed reach out to those businesses. The Councillor asked what the timeline was for publishing the SOP online for public view. He was told shortly.

Sherie Pinzino, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors, was recognized. The Chair asked if her Department was included in the discussions as it related to the SOP. Ms. Pinzino stated that they were, to a certain degree. She also stated that her Department would be able to take on their newly acquired responsibilities, though it will include a small learning curve.

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Baptiste, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take **“NO FURTHER ACTION”** on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lopes and Morad, requesting, that Derek Santos, Executive Director of the New Bedford Economic Development Council, provide to the Committee on Finance the annual program report detailing the status of the City of New Bedford Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Tax Assessments (STA) and Tax Increment Exemption (TIE) activity for all active certified projects.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell to City Council, submitting two proposed Resolutions; a Resolution to file and accept grants with and from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program for Improvements to the Common; and a Resolution for the dedication of Riverside Park. (Matter ID #1867) (Referred – November 25, 2025.)

RESOLUTION, To file and accept grants with and from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program for Improvements to the Common. (Matter ID #1868) (Referred – November 25, 2025.)

RESOLUTION, For the dedication of Riverside Park. (Matter ID #1869) (Referred – November 25, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches. Ms. Rapoza explained that the City has received a State Park grant for park improvements. This specific grant is to renovate and relocate the playground at Riverside Park. This decision was made due to flooding issues; where the playground as currently located, it becomes flooded when it rains. The new plan moves the playground upland in the park area. The State grant is for \$425,000. They will also reimburse 70% of the full cost, which is estimated to be \$800,063. In addition to the funding received from the State, the Parks Department has received \$63,750 from a private organization called Envision Resilience, and they have submitted a CPA application to secure additional funding for the remaining balance, which would be \$311,313.

Ms. Rapoza went on to add that the State requires that the City approve the full amount of the project to secure their funding. She explained that if the Department does not receive the full amount for the CPA funding, the City will not accept the park grant. Ms. Rapoza also shared that the State requires the City to present the deeds for the park. During the process, it was discovered that the City never did a parkland dedication on the land. Although the park opened in 2005, it was never dedicated. The park, however, remains protected under MGL Article 97 as recreational land. The State has requested that the property be officially designated as parkland by the City Council.

The Chair had questions for Robert Ekstrom, CFO, who had left the room.

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

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

The Chair recognized Mr. Ekstrom and stated that Ms. Rapoza had explained the financing of the Riverside Park program; the Committee wanted to know if the CFO had any concerns. Mr. Ekstrom replied that he had no concerns. He added that where this is a State commitment, the funding would be guaranteed; the City would pay the costs upfront and be reimbursed by the State afterwards.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Baptiste, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the RESOLUTION, to file and accept grants with and from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program for Improvements to the Common, and ADOPTION of the RESOLUTION, for the dedication of Riverside Park.

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REPORT, Committee on Finance, recommending to the City Council, ADOPTION of the ORDER, for the City of New Bedford to accept a donation of real estate from Wayland Development Corp., consisting of 2 parcels shown on City of New Bedford Assessors Map 132 as Lot 62 and the second on Map 132 as Lot 6. (Matter ID #1878) (Referred – November 25, 2025.)

AN ORDER, (Matter ID #1550) (Referred – September 25, 2025.)

The Chair reminded the Committee that this matter was originally heard in the Finance Committee, referred out to the full City Council, and then returned to Committee because there were additional questions about the parcels and the utilization of CPA funds.

The Chair recognized Jessica Bailey, Community Preservation Act (CPA) Manager, who was asked about CPA funding in 2023 that was granted to Environmental Stewardship, and what it was to be used for. Ms. Bailey stated that back in FY23, Environmental submitted a proposal for the acquisition and rehabilitation of the properties being discussed. At that point, the owner was not attempting to donate the land to the City as they are now, that is why the original proposal included the acquisition. The proposal was determined eligible and was awarded the requested funding.

Ms. Bailey explained further that Environmental later came back to the CPA and said that the owner had decided to donate the land to the City instead. The funds were then allowed to be put toward the rehabilitation and cleanup of the property. The total amount of \$45,000 was approved by the Finance Committee and later adopted by the full City Council. The funds have not yet been used in their entirety; they remain in the CPA and are waiting to be expended. Of the \$45,000, allotted to date is \$6,950 (\$4,000 for Environmental and \$2,950 for a title search).

Ms. Bailey added that Environmental has been given two extensions to use the funds. Councillor Oliver asked if they could approach the CPA for another extension; he was told that they could.

On motion by Councillor Pereria and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To table the matter.

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

The Chair recognized Chancery Perks, Conservation Agent for Environmental Stewardship. Councillor Oliver asked Mr. Perks if Environmental Stewardship would be seeking an extension on the CPA funding. He was told no; based on the timeline, it could be completed by June with the funding appropriated thus far. The Councillor asked if there was a drawn out plan for the property. He was told that due to the scope of the area, an engineering plan would not be needed. The Councillor asked if the larger parcel were to not be accepted, would it prohibit the work being planned on the smaller parcel from taking place. Mr. Perks stated he believed that was correct. The Councillor asked if there was any planned use for the larger parcel. He was told there were not currently any plans for development or recreational use.

Councillor Carney asked if there were any stipulations or encumbrances on the property from the current owner if the City takes the land. Mr. Perks replied that to his knowledge, there were not.

Councillor Pereira asked Mr. Perks if the larger parcel was wetlands. He was told it was a mix of wetlands, with approximately 80% of the property being wetlands. The Councillor asked if the property could be developed. He was told not for a strip-mall type structure, but laws and opinions change as it relates to land so anything could happen. He went on to say they are trying to preserve this land for its waterway uses.

Councillor Oliver stated that if the property was able to be developed, a development company may be willing to take on the task. Mr. Perks stated that market forces in the future may render the parcel usable for something that would be adverse to the water course, which is what they are trying to prevent from happening.

Councillor Morad asked for the size of the larger parcel. Atty. Katherine Schuko, Associate City Solicitor, answered that it was in excess of 11.7408 acres. The Councillor asked how the parcel could be accessed. Mr. Perks replied that he believed there was the ability to access the property from the north and south sides. The Councillor asked if the property was landlocked. She was told it was not. The Councillor asked if the property was being taxed as wetlands. She was told yes, that the owner was being given an abatement on the property.

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Baptiste, the Committee VOTED: To AMEND the REPORT, by striking the phrase “consisting of 2 parcels” and by striking the phrase “and the second on Map 132 as Lot 6”. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 6, Nays 3. (Councillors Burgo, Giesta and Morad OPPOSED.)

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the REPORT, AS AMENDED, recommending ADOPTION of the ORDER, AS AMENDED, for the City of New Bedford to accept a donation of real estate from Wayland Development Corp., shown on City of New Bedford Assessors Map 132 as Lot 62. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 8, Nays 1. (Councillor Morad OPPOSED.)

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.
Clerk of Committees