



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS
DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2025
TIME: 7:01 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS NAOMI CARNEY, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE (7:10); SHANE BURGO; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES; SHAWN OLIVER (7:10); RYAN PEREIRA

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS MARIA Giesta; JOSEPH LOPES; LINDA MORAD

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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 Communications into the record from Councillors Giesta and Morad explaining their absence. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Burgo. The Clerk informed the Committee that he received a text from Councillor Lopes explaining that he had had a family emergency and would not be in attendance. Councillor Abreu informed the Committee that he had received a text from Councillor Oliver explaining that he would be tardy in arriving at the meeting.

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

Chris Lamontagne, 236 Hemlock Street, New Bedford, 02740, speaking on "Rat Infestation / City Transparency". (Referred – November 18, 2025.)

The Chair recognized Chris Lamontagne, who spoke on the rat infestation and City transparency when it comes to the issue of rat control.

Citizen's Input Time was concluded.

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PUBLIC HEARING 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 02740. (Application Received November 05, 2025.) (Duly advertised in The Standard-Times on Tuesday, December 02, 2025 and Tuesday, December 09, 2025.)

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

The Applicant, Laguerre Pierre Marc, was not present. The Chair then asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak on the matter.

The Chair recognized Arthur Amaral, 16 Fieldstone Drive, Westport, MA, who spoke against the proposal. Mr. Amaral was the developer of a strip mall located across the street from the proposed motor vehicle sales location at 724 Ashley Boulevard. He expressed concern that the location is in disarray and nothing has been done to address the building or the grounds.

The Chair asked Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner for the Department of Inspectional Services, to take the podium and offer his opinion on Mr. Amaral's concerns. Mr. Romanowicz stated that the proposed business is allowed in that area. The Special Permit request is to have a car lot with eight vehicles and perform vehicle repair. However, the applicant is unable to do vehicle repair at this time because the property lacks the approved MDC trap. He said that the applicant has replaced the roof, but there is a lot of work that has to be done to the interior of the building.

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

The Chair asked if there was anyone present, other than Mr. Amaral, who wished to speak and/or be recorded in opposition of the Petition. There were none.

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To continue the Public Hearing to Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of JASON THODY as the NEW BEDFORD POLICE CHIEF. (Matter ID #1784) (Referred – November 13, 2025.)

On motion by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file Chief Thody's resume and a report titled "One Year Goals and Objectives".

The Chair recognized Jason Thody, Chief of Police, who gave the Committee an update on his position since becoming Chief.

Councillor Pereira said that Chief Thody had stated in his report that during his tenure as Chief of Police in Hartford, CT, crime was reduced by 33%. He asked for clarification of that statement. Chief Thody explained that it had to do with crimes reported to the FBI. The FBI requires that Police Departments submit crime reports related to specific types of crime.

Councillor Pereira asked Chief Thody about his involvement as a consultant on speeding/ticketing cameras. Chief Thody explained that when he retired from Hartford, he worked as a consultant for a firm called Glass Shield; he provided data and advice on the installation of speed cameras, resulting in the process being adopted by a number of communities throughout Connecticut. Councillor Pereira asked Chief Thody about his goal of reaching a full complement of Officers; he replied that the department is currently moving in that direction.

Councillor Oliver asked Chief Thody how he is dealing with overseeing a much smaller Police Department than he was used to and adapting to a much smaller budget. Chief Thody replied that when he was appointed, the FY26 budget had already been approved. He will have input when the FY27 budget is presented. He acknowledged that although staffing volume is less, the Officers that serve are invested in their community, with many residing and/or having family in the City.

Councillor Oliver asked Chief Thody to expand upon a section in his report that stated that while in Hartford, out of 199 organized demonstrations, there were only two arrests. The Chief explained that during his tenure in Hartford, there was a change in attitude toward Police based on the actions of other Officers throughout the country. Because of these issues, his department focused on transparency and building trust within the community, creating a mutual trust between his department and the citizens of Hartford.

Councillor Oliver asked Chief Thody if he would be able to work well with the Mayor, basing his decisions on being Chief and not that of the Administration. Chief Thody explained that he reported directly to the Mayor and that he would work with him for the betterment of the City, but that when it came to law enforcement issues, that would be under his realm.

Councillor Abreu asked how Chief Thody felt about promoting from within as far as the appointment of positions were concerned. Chief Thody stated that he favored promotion from within the ranks. He also believes in providing educational opportunities for his staff and others within the department. Councillor Abreu asked Chief Thody how his relationship with the Police Union has been so far. Chief Thody said that it has been a good working relationship and he continues to meet with Union leaders monthly.

Councillor Abreu asked how Chief Thody was dealing with immigration issues in the City. Chief Thody replied that the department's position on immigration is found on their website and within their social media posts. He said they do not become directly involved in immigration issues but offer their services to help defuse possible contention when entities such as ICE conduct an operation within the City. The Chief said that the Police Department did not originally have a published policy on the matter; however, they do now.

Councillor Baptiste asked what Chief Thody's plan was for filling the two Deputy Chief positions. Chief Thody said he planned to post the positions within the next week or so and that the posts will include the acceptance of internal and external candidates. Councillor Baptiste stressed that he favors internal candidates, specifically those of color, who in his opinion, are often overlooked.

Councillor Burgo asked Chief Thody how he found morale to be among the force. Chief Thody stated he finds it to be good and that the goal is to give the members of the force the tools and opportunities necessary to work toward improving morale.

Councillor Gomes stated that people from within the ranks are ready to be promoted and that he too favors promoting from within. He also stressed the need for training which in turn would result in well-rounded officers. Chief Thody said that outside of the Deputy Chief positions, other positions to be filled are subject to Civil Service guidelines.

Councillor Burgo made a motion, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu, to recommend to the City Council Approval of the Appointment of Jason Thody as the New Bedford Chief of Police.

On the Question, Councillor Carney stated that while she personally did not object to Jason Thody serving as Chief of Police, she did have concerns that there were qualified internal candidates, and they were passed over for someone outside of the community. She stated that she very much favors internal promotions, if those applicants are qualified. She stated that she does not fault Chief Thody, but she does fault the Mayor, who made the final decision.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of JASON THODY as NEW BEDFORD CHIEF OF POLICE. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 7, Nays 1. (Councillor Carney OPPOSED.)

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the APPOINTMENT of GEORGE M. VIVEIROS, New Bedford, MA to the BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS, replacing Lee Blake who has resigned; this term will expire May 2026. (Matter ID #1794) (Referred – November 13, 2025.)

The Chair recognized George Viveiros, who stated that he wanted to become involved in a committee that would help make the City a better place to live. When he was asked to consider the Park Board by the Administration, he felt it would be a good fit.

Councillor Oliver asked Mr. Viveiros about the goals he may have for the City's parks. Mr. Viveiros stated he would like to see increased recreational activity inclusive of everyone, for example, activities for those with special needs.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Oliver, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the APPOINTMENT of GEORGE M. VIVEIROS to the BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS.

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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.)

The item was not taken up. Matter remains in Committee.

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COMMUNICATION, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council, submitting an Application for **RENEWAL of a PRIVATE LIVERY LICENSE** on behalf of Ana L. Valentin Burgos, 627 Allen Street, New Bedford, MA, d/b/a **GERANA'S TRANSPORTATION, INC.**, 211 Weld Street, New Bedford, MA. (**License to Expire - June 30, 2026.**) (Matter ID #0322) (Referred – November 25, 2025.)

The Chair stated that this item has been in Committee for some time and would entertain a motion to refer the item to City Council recommending "No Further Action".

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take "**NO FURTHER ACTION**" on the matter at this time.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees