

JOINT CONVENTION MEETING
Chambers of the City Council
Wednesday, January 07, 2026

CITY COUNCIL
Municipal Building
6:10 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Abreu, Councillor Shane Burgo, Councillor Naomi Carney, Councillor Leo Choquette, School Committee Member Melissa Costa, School Committee Member Christopher Cotter, Councillor Brian Gomes, School Committee Member Joaquim Livramento Jr., Mayor Jonathan Mitchell, School Committee Member Vonmarie Moniz, Councillor Shawn Oliver, Councillor Scott Pemberton, Councillor Ryan Pereira, School Committee Member Richard Porter III and Councillor James Roy.

LATE: Councillor Derek Baptiste (6:12)

ABSENT: Councillor Joseph Lopes

Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell, Chairman of the Joint Convention, called the meeting to order and presided.

Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell led the Assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING LIVE STREAMED AND RECORDED.

CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS CAN BE VIEWED ON THE
CITY OF NEW BEDFORD'S HOMEPAGE UNDER QUICK LINKS, THEN MEETINGS.

COMMUNICATION, Dennis W. Farias, to the City Council, notifying that Mayor Mitchell has convened a Joint Convention of the City Council and School Committee to be held on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Room 214, City Hall, for the purpose of electing a new School Committee member to fill the vacancy resulting from the recent passing of Bruce Oliveira.

Received and Placed on File.

(#0007)

COMMUNICATION, Manuel DeBrito, Chairperson of the New Bedford Election Commission, notifying the Joint Convention Members that the School Committee applicants are City of New Bedford residents and registered voters.

Received and Placed on File.

(#0008)

COMMUNICATION, Councillor Lopes, to City Council, notifying that he will be unable to attend the Joint Convention of the School Committee and City Council on Wednesday, January 07, 2026 due to a prior commitment.

Received and Placed on File.

(#0009)

At this time the floor was open for any amendments to the Convention Rules.

A Motion was made by Councillor Roy, and duly seconded, to amend Rule 1 under Section VII, MISCELLANEOUS, of the Convention Rules by striking the words "2/3 of the Convention (12)" and inserting in their place "nine (9) members of the Convention", so that the Rule read as follows:

"Motions to adopt rules for election may be made prior to the election or while the election is pending. Rules adopted must be consented to by nine (9) members of the Convention."

This motion passed on a voice vote of All Ayes.

A Motion was made by Councillor Roy, and duly seconded, to amend Section VI, ELECTION, of the Convention Rules by striking Rules 3 and 4 in their entirety and adding a new Rule 3, to read as follows:

"If no nominee receives a majority vote of the Convention by the first ballot, the roll call shall be repeated. The candidate receiving the fewest votes shall not be considered in subsequent ballots, unless there is a tie for the fewest votes, in which case all nominees from the previous ballot shall remain in nomination."

This motion passed on a voice vote of All Ayes.

A Motion was made by Councillor Roy, and duly seconded, to amend Section VIII, MISCELLANEOUS, of the Convention Rules by adding a new Rule 4 to read as follows:

“It is the intent of the Joint Convention that the election to fill the vacant School Committee seat be conducted and completed at a single meeting. The Convention shall proceed through nominations, debate, and balloting without adjournment until a nominee is elected, unless the Convention determines by a majority vote that continuation is not practicable.”

This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 14, Nays 2. (Councillor Carney and Mayor Mitchell OPPOSED.)

A Motion was made by Councillor Burgo, and duly seconded, to adopt Rule 2a of Section IV, NOMINEES, of the Convention Rules.

A Motion was made by Councillor Oliver to adopt Rule 2b, and to amend Rule 2a of Section IV, NOMINEES, of the Convention Rules by striking the words “**FIVE (5)** minutes” and inserting in their place “**THREE (3)** minutes”, so that the Rule read as follows:

“Prior to opening the floor for nominations, any person present at the Convention seeking to be nominated shall be provided opportunity to address the Convention for a maximum of **THREE (3)** minutes. Persons seeking to be nominated shall not be permitted to comment with regard to the qualifications or any other matter concerning another prospective Nominee or potential candidate.”

This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 9, Nays 6. (Mayor Mitchell, Councillors Baptiste Burgo and Roy, and School Committee Members Moniz and Porter OPPOSED.) (School Committee Member Costa abstained present for vote.)

A Motion was made by Councillor Burgo, and duly seconded, to adopt Rule 1a of Section V, DEBATE of the Convention Rules.

This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 16, Nays 0.

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
IN CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 7, 2026

ORDERED, that the Joint Convention of the City Council and School Committee adopt the rules of the Joint Convention.

ADOPTED CONVENTION RULES

I. PRESIDING OFFICER

1. Mayor presides if present. Presiding officer shall be referred to as "Mr. Chairman.”
2. If Mayor is not present, CONVENTION elects a member as presiding member.
3. If the Chair vacates to debate the merits or for some other reason, he shall call the City Council President to preside in his place before vacating. If the Council President is not present, he shall call the Vice-Chair of the School Committee to preside. Further succession, if necessary, shall be the City Council First Vice President; the City Council Second Vice President. If none of the titles of succession named are present or if the City Council Second Vice President must vacate for some reason, any member may be called by the person prior to vacating the chair.

II. QUORUM

1. Majority of Convention needed for a quorum; 9 members necessary.

III. NOMINATIONS

1. Presiding officer declares floor open for nominations.
2. Nomination may be made from the chair.
3. Nominations may be made from the floor; No second required.
4. No member including the Chair may nominate more than one candidate.
5. It shall not be required that a person be present at the Convention meeting to be nominated.

6. Prior to closing nominations, the Chair shall ask if any nominee present objects to having his or her name considered for appointment. If a nominee objects, that person's name shall be taken out of nomination and the member who nominated the objecting candidate may nominate another candidate.

7. Presiding officer closes nominations once it is clear that all nominations have been made. Once the Chair declares nominations are closed, nominations may not be opened again unless by majority vote of the Convention.

8. Any motion to close nominations must be approved by 2/3 vote (12). No such motion is in order while a member seeks the floor to make a nomination.

IV. NOMINEES

1. No person may be nominated unless he or she resides in the city of New Bedford and is a qualified voter in New Bedford in accordance with G.L. c. 43 §44C. The Election Commissioner shall be present to confirm that all nominees are qualified voters.

2A. Prior to opening the floor for nominations, any person present at the Convention seeking to be nominated shall be provided opportunity to address the Convention for a maximum of three (3) minutes. Persons seeking to be nominated shall not be permitted to comment with regard to the qualifications or any other matter concerning another prospective Nominee or potential candidate.

2B. At the close of nominations, each nominee shall be provided opportunity to address the Convention for a maximum of three (3) minutes. Nominees shall not be permitted to comment with regard to the qualifications or any other matter concerning another Nominee.

V. DEBATE

1A. Each member may speak twice, each time for 5 minutes. Once the first member votes by roll call, debate cannot be reopened even if election must proceed beyond the first balloting roll call.

2. Chair may not debate or issue opinion on the merits unless he vacates the chair.

VI. ELECTION

1. Nine (9) votes necessary for a nominee to be elected.

2. Election is to be held by roll call vote of the Convention. The City Clerk shall serve as Clerk of the Convention and the roll call shall be called alphabetically by Clerk of the Convention. Each member shall declare the name of the nominee for whom they wish to vote. The Clerk shall record and tally the vote and report the result to the chair. The Chair shall announce the vote totals for each nominee and declare the election if a nominee receives 9 or more votes.

3. If no nominee receives a majority vote of the Convention by the first ballot, the roll shall be repeated. The candidate receiving the fewest votes shall not be considered in subsequent ballots unless there is a tie for the fewest votes, in which case all nominees from the previous ballot shall remain in nomination.

VII. FINALITY OF ELECTION

1. Election is final immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline, or if absent and has consented to his/her candidacy. If the person elected is not present and has not consented, the election becomes final when he or she is notified of the election and accepts. If the person elected declines after notification, the election is incomplete and another vote would need to be taken.

2. If the elected candidate is present, the City Clerk shall swear in the person prior to adjournment of the Convention.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Motions to adopt rules for election may be made prior to the election or while the election is pending. Rules adopted must be consented to by 9 votes.

2. Parliamentarians for the Convention shall be Eric A. Jaikes, Esq., City Solicitor and David Gerwatowski, Esq. Legislative Counsel to the City Council.

3. Rules governing the Convention shall be those adopted by the Convention and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition).

4. It is the intent of the Joint Convention that the election to fill the vacant School Committee seat be conducted and completed at a single meeting. The Convention shall proceed through nominations, debate and balloting without adjournment until a nominee is elected, unless the Convention determines by a majority vote that continuation is not practical.

IX. ROLL CALL ORDER

Councillor Ian Abreu
Councillor Derek Baptiste
Councillor Shane A. Burgo
Councillor Naomi R.A. Carney
Councillor Leo Choquette
School Committee Member Melissa Costa
School Committee Member Christopher Cotter
Councillor Brian K. Gomes
School Committee Member Joaquim Livramento Jr.
Councillor Joseph P. Lopes
Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell
School Committee Member Vonmarie Moniz
Councillor Shawn Oliver
Councillor Scott Pemberton
Councillor Ryan Pereira
School Committee Member Richard Porter III
Councillor James Roy

Adopted as Amended – Yeas 16, Nays 0. (#0010)

The floor was opened for School Committee candidates to address the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Eldric Abreu addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Erin Alvarado addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Lee Blake addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Henry Bousquet addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Marcus Coward addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Jose Galarza addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate William Brad Markey addressed the Joint Convention.
School Committee Candidate Cheryl Ann Viveiros addressed the Joint Convention.

The floor was opened for nominations for the School Committee. The following nominations were made:

- Councillor Abreu nominated Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Burgo nominated Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver nominated Cheryl Ann Viveiros.
- Councillor Carney nominated William Brad Markey.
- School Committee Member Costa nominated Lee Blake.

The floor was opened for School Committee nominees to address the Joint Convention.
School Committee Nominee Lee Blake addressed the Joint Convention for a second time.
School Committee Nominee Henry Bousquet addressed the Joint Convention for a second time.
School Committee Nominee Marcus Coward addressed the Joint Convention for a second time.
School Committee Nominee William Brad Markey addressed the Joint Convention for a second time.
School Committee Nominee Cheryl Ann Viveiros addressed the Joint Convention for a second time.

The following members addressed the Joint Convention:

- Councillor Burgo spoke regarding his nomination for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Porter spoke in support of the nomination of Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver spoke regarding his nomination of Cheryl Ann Viveiros.
- Councillor Baptiste addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Carney addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Roy addressed the Joint Convention and expressed his support to Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Gomes addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Abreu addressed the Joint Convention.

- School Committee member Livramento addressed the Joint Convention.
- School Committee member Cotter addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Pereira addressed the Joint Convention and expressed his support to Henry Bousquet
- School Committee member Costa addressed the Joint Convention.
- Mayor Mitchell addressed the Joint Convention and expressed his support for William Brad Markey.
- Councillor Choquette addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Pemberton addressed the Joint Convention.
- Councillor Carney addressed the Joint Convention a second time.
- School Committee member Livramento addressed the Joint Convention a second time.

Following debate and statements of support by members of the Joint Convention, they proceeded to vote.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 1 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for William Brad Markey.
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Lee Blake.
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for William Brad Markey.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Cheryl Ann Viveiros.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 1:

- Lee Blake received one (1) vote.
- Henry Bousquet received five (5) votes.
- Marcus Coward received seven (7) votes.
- William Markey received two (2) votes.
- Cheryl Ann Viveiros received one (1) vote.

A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 1; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 2 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Lee Blake.
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for William Brad Markey.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.

- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 2:

- Lee Blake received one (1) vote.
- Henry Bousquet received seven (7) votes.
- Marcus Coward received seven (7) votes.
- William Markey received two (1) votes.

A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 2; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 3 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Marcus Coward
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 3:

- Henry Bousquet received eight (8) votes.
- Marcus Coward received eight (8) votes.

A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 3; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 4 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Marcus Coward
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 4:

- Henry Bousquet received eight (8) votes.
 - Marcus Coward received eight (8) votes.
- A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 4; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 5 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Marcus Coward
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 5:

- Henry Bousquet received eight (8) votes.
 - Marcus Coward received eight (8) votes.
- A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 5; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 6 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Marcus Coward
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 6:

- Henry Bousquet received eight (8) votes.
 - Marcus Coward received eight (8) votes.
- A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 6; therefore, a subsequent ballot was required.

Roll Call Nominations Ballot No. 7 was conducted, with the following results recorded:

- Councillor Abreu voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Baptiste voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Burgo voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Carney voted for Henry Bousquet
- Councillor Choquette voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Costa voted for Marcus Coward
- School Committee member Cotter voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Gomes voted for Marcus Coward.
- School Committee member Livramento voted for Marcus Coward.
- Mayor Mitchell voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Moniz voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Oliver voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pemberton voted for Henry Bousquet.
- Councillor Pereira voted for Henry Bousquet.
- School Committee member Porter voted for Marcus Coward.
- Councillor Roy voted for Marcus Coward.

Results from Ballot No. 7:

- Henry Bousquet received eight (8) votes.
 - Marcus Coward received eight (8) votes.
- A majority was not achieved on Ballot No. 7.

On a motion, the Joint Convention members recessed.

The Joint Convention was reconvened, at which time the members conducted a roll call vote to continue the meeting, as a majority vote to elect a School Committee member could not be obtained.

The motion to continue passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 9, Nays 7. (Councillors Baptiste, Burgo and Roy, and School Committee Members Costa, Livramento, Moniz and Porter OPPOSED.)

The Joint Convention of the City Council and School Committee is scheduled to reconvene on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in City Council Chambers.

ATTEST:

DENNIS W. FARIAS, CITY CLERK/
CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL