



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Jonathan Carvalho
(508) 979-1410
icarvalho@newbedford-ma.gov

Date: October 31, 2017
For Immediate Release

P R E S S R E L E A S E

AFSCME union reaches agreement with City on multi-year contract

New Bedford, Massachusetts- New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union Local 851, Council 93, have reached a new labor contract.

The City of New Bedford employs nearly 326 AFSCME union employees, who serve the public in a variety of roles including as clerks, custodians, carpenters, electricians, maintenance workers, mechanics, inspectors, pipefitters, zoo keepers, 911 dispatchers, among other positions.

AFSCME Local 851 members ratified the agreement on Thursday, October 26, 2017.

“This is a fair agreement that will eliminate the lowest wages from our pay scale,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell, who has advocated for a living wage for all city employees. “At the same time, the agreement is responsible to taxpayers, and establishes a full residency requirement for new employees. I’m grateful for the willingness of AFSCME’s members to negotiate in good faith throughout the contract process, and for their service to the residents of the city.”

The agreement covers the period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019. AFSCME had been working without a settled contract since the prior agreement expired on June 30, 2016. In March of 2017, the City and AFSCME reached an agreement which was ratified by the union membership, but the appropriation to fund the agreement was not approved by the City Council.

Highlights of the contract include:

- **Residency:** Employees hired by the City after the date of the agreement shall remain a New Bedford resident for the **entire tenure** of their employment.
- The City will conduct a study to evaluate the wage range and schedule for all AFSCME positions, which has not previously been done for AFSCME positions in New Bedford. The study will help to inform the City's efforts **to attract and retain qualified employees** to fill those positions.

- In furtherance of the Mayor's goal of providing the City's lowest paid employees a living wage, **two grades and one step have been eliminated from the bottom of the pay scale.** (By July 2018, the lowest paid AFSCME position will earn \$13.92 an hour.)
- Use of GPS technology will assist in the deployment and coordination of City personnel and equipment.
- Temporary Light Duty: Employees who are injured or ill and temporarily unable to perform regular assignments will be given an opportunity to work in a temporary light-duty assignment when available.
- Establishment of a **Joint Labor Management Committee** to improve communications between management and labor, encourage discussion of health and safety improvements, training, and employee productivity among other matters.
- AFSCME employees will receive wage increases:
 - o The 1.5% planned for January 1, 2017, in the agreement earlier this year which was not appropriated, will be effective July 1, 2017.
 - o 1% on July 1, 2017;
 - o 1% on January 1, 2018;
 - o 1.5% on July 1, 2018.
- AFSCME employees will also receive a \$500 signing bonus.

###