

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 02, 2016

RESOLUTION HONORING RONALD H. LABELLE, COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

WHEREAS, Ronald Labelle, grandson of French Canadian immigrants, was born in New Bedford, is the son of Henry and Jean Labelle, is married to his devoted wife Donna, and is the loving father of their three children, Jennifer, Katelyn and Keith; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Labelle is a proud graduate of New Bedford High School, Class of 1971, received his undergraduate degree in Engineering from Southeastern Massachusetts University, and began his professional career working for a local company, D.W. White Construction as an engineer and foreman, until being hired in 1989, by then Mayor John Bullard, to head the City's Water Department and to construct the ambitious and very controversial Waste Water Treatment plant at Fort Rodman, where Ron designed a facility that has the capacity to treat 30 million gallons of 'dirty water' per day and is a model for other municipalities; and

WHEREAS, In addition to managing the City's wastewater system, which includes 309 miles of piping, 30 pumping stations, 26 combined sewer outflows and all the Federal regulations that oversee the City's wastewater treatment through the Clean Water Act, Commissioner Labelle and his dedicated Team are responsible for 18 million gallons of fresh water, the drinking water, which is supplied to the residents of New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven and Freetown; and

WHEREAS, When you think about the numbers, the 3,000 acres of watershed property in Dartmouth, Freetown and Rochester, the Quitticas Water Treatment facility with the capacity to supply 45 million gallons of clean water a day, the 75 million gallon High Hill Reservoir, the 350 miles of piping and the 20,000 valves throughout the water system, the 5,500 fire hydrants, the 5,000 catch basins, you begin to realize that New Bedford has a complex system of water collection and distribution, if any one of these systems shuts down, there could be a catastrophic impact to New Bedford and the surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Labelle also oversees the City's highways budget, where he is responsible for our City streets, the engineering division, and the operation of a medium size construction company which he runs like a small business and has saved the City millions of dollars by having our dedicated and talented City employees perform the jobs that many other Cities our size contract out; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, Mayor after Mayor continually centralize tasks and increase areas of responsibility under the umbrella of Commissioner Labelle and his Team, to include cemeteries, crosswalks, forestry, masonry design, parks, sidewalks, snow removal, street lights and street signs, traffic signals, and many other tasks and responsibilities too numerous to detail; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Labelle is most proud of the Team he has built, including the 185 members of the Department of Public Infrastructure, where he continually sets higher expectations and challenges the Team to be the best they can, provides the training and tools they need to do the job, reminds them that they are public servants who should do their best to assist whenever possible and take pride in the work they perform each day in their community, and promotes his philosophy of "we are very good at what we do"; and

WHEREAS, The City of New Bedford has been blessed that Commissioner Labelle, a twenty four hour a day, seven day a week kind of guy, with management skills to operate a major construction company and certifications in the areas of water and wastewater management that make him an industry leader that every community is in awe of, he has dedicated his career to the City of New Bedford for the past twenty-seven years, changing the image of the public works department employee and transforming the City's Department of Public Infrastructure into a professional operation staffed by dedicated, talented and hardworking employees that are the extended family of Commissioner Ronald Labelle; and

WHEREAS, On June 30, 2016, after more than twenty seven years of a distinguished career in the City of New Bedford, it is with great sadness, but the utmost respect that his loving family, colleagues throughout the industry and fellow City of New Bedford employees will wish Commissioner Ronald Labelle best wishes for a long, happy and healthy retirement:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the New Bedford City Council hereby sincerely thanks and honors **RONALD H. LABELLE, COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**, commends him for his exemplary career as an employee of the City of New Bedford, and thanks him for his dedication, passion and vision in transforming our City's Department of Public Infrastructure into the 'public works' department that is now emulated by so many other towns and municipalities; and further, **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the New Bedford City Council extends our warm and sincere best wishes to **RONALD H. LABELLE** for a long, happy and healthy retirement.