



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

July 13, 2023

City Council President Linda Morad and
Honorable Members of the City Council
133 William Street, Room 215
New Bedford, MA 02740

RE: ✓ Home Rule Petition Concerning the Residency of the Administrative Assistant to the Board of
Assessors (AABA)

Ordinance Concerning the Residency of the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors
(AABA)

Dear Council President Morad and Honorable Members of the City Council:

The position of Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors was established by Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990. Both the 1990 Act and the New Bedford Code of Ordinances required the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors to be a New Bedford resident.

After more than a year of extensive recruitment efforts, including the use of multiple "headhunting" firms, the City has been unable to recruit a qualified candidate for this critical department head position. It has become clear that the strict residency requirement is a significant contributing factor to the lack of progress.

The context in which the City is presently competing for AABA candidates is far different than that which existed when the Act and the Code provisions were adopted thirty-three years ago. New Bedford's city-wide property valuation has grown by several orders of magnitude since 1990, and presently exceeds \$8.2 billion. Accompanying this growth has been an increase in the overall complexity of the valuation process.

It is no surprise then that municipal assessing positions at the level of department head have become highly specialized over time and the number of individuals possessing the necessary professional credentials and experience are virtually non-existent within the borders of the City. Even at the state and regional level there are very few potential candidates on the market at any one time. In attempting to engage these prospective candidates, New Bedford is finding itself at an immediate competitive disadvantage when compared to other communities with no strict residency requirement.

I am therefore enclosing for your consideration a Home Rule Petition to the Massachusetts General Court to remove the residency requirement from state law. Likewise, I am enclosing an Ordinance removing the residency requirement from the New Bedford Code of Ordinances. Both items must be enacted for the residency requirement to be lifted. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan F. Mitchell
Mayor

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSORS OF THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD TO BE A NON-RESIDENT

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990, or any general or special law to the contrary, the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Assessors of the City of New Bedford may be a non-resident of the City of New Bedford.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.