

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 18, 2017

RESOLUTION HONORING MARIA A. TOMASIA, ELECTION COMMISSIONER, ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

WHEREAS, Maria Tomasia, being born on the Azorean Island of St. Michael, is the daughter of John and Hilda Couto, was married in October of 1969, to her devoted husband, John, and is the loving mother to their two children, Eric and Michelle; and

WHEREAS, Maria Tomasia came to the United States with her parents in 1960, and lived for many years with her family in their modest home on Nelson Street, attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel Elementary and Roosevelt Junior High Schools where, for many years, she was bullied for being an immigrant and was the victim of bigotry due to her Portuguese heritage; but wanting more for herself than the life of a factory worker, Maria refused to allow the prejudice of others deter her from pursuing her education and, through great perseverance, she went on to graduate from New Bedford High School as a proud member of the Class of 1968; and

WHEREAS, Still feeling that she did not truly belong in this country, Maria and her husband returned to the Azores for a period of time, deciding in 1976 to return to the City of New Bedford, determined to overcome discrimination, make their home here and to make a positive difference in the community in which they chose to live; and

WHEREAS, Maria Tomasia has held various management positions throughout her professional career, including a local dental practice, WJFD Radio and the New Bedford School Department before moving on to work as a Constituent Services Liaison in the New Bedford district office for the late Congressman Gerry E. Studds, and then in January 1986, to Mayor John Bullard's Office and ultimately being appointed by Mayor Bullard to the position of Election Commissioner for the City of New Bedford on April 1, 1990, where she has spent the last 27 years overseeing City, State and National elections, and has been the first to announce the City's voting results for four U.S. Presidents, five City Mayors, numerous Senators, Representatives, Assessors, City Councillors and School Committee members; and

WHEREAS, During her tenure, Maria Tomasia has effortlessly supervised the modernization of the voting process, from the hand-counting of ballots and late night election results to the current electronic voting machines; she has seamlessly managed and coordinated the continual staffing, police details and changing of locations for all 42 voting precincts in the City, as well as the training of election workers and precinct wardens and, perhaps the most difficult aspect of her duties, effectively handling the sensitive issues that often arise and surround partisan politics, and has always been a hands-on Commissioner and a welcoming face to those that visit the Election Office in City Hall; and

WHEREAS, In addition to being the City's Election Commissioner, Maria Tomasia serves the public as a Justice of the Peace and is known throughout the Portuguese community of Greater New Bedford as a kind, humble and trustworthy role model and friend who has spent her career assisting, advising, and guiding countless Portuguese immigrants as they have navigated oceans of paperwork and legal requirements in pursuit of attaining their dreams of U.S. Citizenship and lives of significance and contribution, just as Maria has done; and

WHEREAS, The City and people of New Bedford have been so blessed by the fact that Maria Tomasia has, for 27 years, dedicated herself to the community where she leaves behind the great legacy of having changed the image of the Election Office to a friendly and professional operation staffed by dedicated, talented and hardworking employees who, over the years, have become an extended family to her; and

WHEREAS, On March 03, 2017, after more than twenty seven years of distinguished service to the City of New Bedford, it is with great sadness, but also the utmost respect and appreciation, that her loving family, colleagues and fellow employees wish Election Commissioner Maria Tomasia the very best as she embarks on the next phase of her amazing journey:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the New Bedford City Council hereby sincerely thanks and honors **MARIA A. TOMASIA, ELECTION COMMISSIONER, ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**, commends her for her exemplary career as an employee of the City of New Bedford, thanks her for her vision, compassion and dedication in her role as Election Commissioner and vigilant caretaker of democracy in our City; and further **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the New Bedford City Council extends its warm and sincere best wishes to **MARIA A. TOMASIA** for a long, happy and healthy retirement.