

Honorable member of the City Council,

Practicing prehospital medicine in the City of New Bedford brings about a demanding set of challenges. A large inner-city with a diverse community such as ours, requires a unique skillset. Members of our service are required to perform many different functions within the community. We are many of our citizens' primary care givers, their therapists, and often their social workers. NBEMS are on the front line of our city's opiate epidemic. Working on the same streets and situations as our city's police and fire departments. Often responding to the same calls and entering the same dynamic scenes, often without the same equipment or protection. Violence against our profession is on the rise. Difficult extrications from our City's housing situations create multiple opportunities for injury. All while providing exceptional care to our citizens.

New Bedford EMS has been a standard for prehospital care. Recently participating in a study which has changed the State of Massachusetts EMS Protocols. The City of New Bedford should be proud of the accomplishments of this department. Thirty-four highly trained prehospital medical providers, servicing a diverse population of over 100,000. We do not just bring you to the hospital anymore. Instead we bring the emergency room to you.

New Bedford Emergency Medical Service is also unique in that it is only one of a handful of "third-service" municipal departments. Unfortunately, it is now one of the only ones not to recognize its employees and afford them the option of Group IV retirement. Group IV is the standard for all other public safety employees in the City of New Bedford, the exception being our extraordinary EMS service. As aforementioned, we respond to the same dynamic calls for service as both the police and fire department. Often times we are left with aftermath of these calls.

Nationwide and especially in Massachusetts, we have been experiencing a shortage of prehospital providers. Our agency has suffered staffing crisis due to this situation. A new paramedic or emt has many choices when they get licensed. Competition from fire departments and the private sector has hurt our recruitment. This has been compounded with the recent decision of the City of Fall River City Council decision to award Fall River EMS with group IV retirement benefits. NBEMS has lost many outstanding providers to fire departments and other ems services.

Call volume for the city has been on the increase. We need the ability to recruit, and more importantly compete for the best talent available. In 2016, NBEMS received 18,264 calls for service bringing in close to six million dollars in revenue for New Bedford. At a recent budget hearing, some of the council had brought forth the question of how to compete and recruit and expand our service. Adding Group IV retirement would be an immense tool in this endeavor.

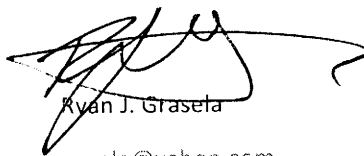
The members of our service understand that this is a lofty undertaking and has financial consequence. As does not being able to staff adequately and eventually expand our department. This career path asks of you to be placed in harm's way to help the citizenry of New Bedford. 100,000 of your constituents, family members, friends, and neighbors expect our agency to be there when you need us. Right now, we need you, the honorable city council to be there for us.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to discussing this further with you.



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