



## **CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**

**JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR**

February 7, 2018

Bristol County Advisory Board  
9 Court Street, Room 48  
Taunton, MA 02780

Dear Members of the Bristol County Advisory Board:

I write on behalf of the City of New Bedford on two matters.

First, I wish to express a general concern regarding the scheduling of Advisory Board meetings, and request that the Board consider holding its meetings on evenings that do not conflict with the regular monthly meetings of the New Bedford City Council. As you know, members of the New Bedford City Council are the only representatives authorized to act as my designee at Advisory Board meetings, and it has proven difficult for Councillors to attend past Board meetings because of the Thursday evening conflict.

A related conflict has occurred annually for at least the past six years on the first Thursday in August, when the entire City Council and I attend the Opening Ceremonies of Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, the city's largest community celebration, and the largest event of its kind in the United States. As a result, New Bedford has been unable each year to provide representation at the August meeting of the Advisory Board.

With regard to the upcoming February 8 meeting of the Advisory Board, please be advised that I am unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of a municipal board on which I serve as chairman. As I describe above, in this instance I am unable to assign a designee from among the New Bedford City Council, as a regular meeting of the Council has already been scheduled for the evening of February 8.

I would welcome the Advisory Board's consideration of these scheduling concerns going forward, and thank you for the opportunity to bring them to your attention.

Second, in light of my inability to attend the February 8 Advisory Board Meeting, I thought it important to submit for the record my reservations regarding the proposed Bristol County Agricultural High School Building Project based on the planned \$53 million local borrowing and the significant associated financing costs to be borne by member communities.

New Bedford's share of the Project financing cost would be paid with funds from the New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS) District Budget. According to information provided, New Bedford's initial "base" annual assessment for Project-related costs currently stands at more than

\$100,000. This “base” figure would be added to the current New Bedford assessment of approximately \$63,000. The combined total would represent an increase of more than 250% in cost to the School Budget.

Such a measurable, long-term pressure on the school budget cannot be justified given the resource limitations facing NBPS and the City of New Bedford more generally. In addition, the City is unable to determine – based on the limited data provided – how future changes in Bristol Agricultural HS enrollment by New Bedford students may impact the school budget over time. On this ground, the City is not in a position to offer its full support at this time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Mitchell  
Mayor

cc: Commissioner Paul B. Kitchen, Chairman  
Commissioner John R. Mitchell  
Commissioner John T. Saunders  
New Bedford City Council President Linda M. Morad  
New Bedford School Committee  
Bristol County Administrator Maria V. Gomes  
Superintendent Pia Durkin, New Bedford Public Schools