



Office of
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City of New Bedford

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April 19, 2019

Mr. Danny D. Romanowicz, Commissioner
Department of Inspectional Services
City of New Bedford
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Mr. Romanowicz,

The New Bedford City Council's Finance Committee, at a meeting held on April 17, 2019, considered the following:

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lima, Abreu, Lopes and Dunn, requesting that the Administration review fees as they relate to solar energy projects. (Ref'd 3/14/19)

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To request that Danny Romanowicz provide the Committee with a breakdown of all solar jobs in the City, to include fees charged by the City, per project. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Please forward all correspondence directly to the Clerk of Committees Office.

Very truly,

Councillor Joseph P. Lopes, Chairman
Committee on Finance

JPL/dmb



DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONAL SERVICES
133 WILLIAM STREET – ROOM 308
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

Memorandum

To: Councillor Joseph P. Lopes, Chairman, Committee on Finance
From: Danny D. Romanowicz, Commissioner
Date: 5/23/2019
Re: Written Motion Solar Energy Projects

This memo responds to a request made by members of the City Council on April 19, 2019 for a “breakdown of all solar jobs in the City, to include fees charged by the City, per project.” Please find the report attached and a summary of the findings of the report below.

The installation of solar panels in the City of New Bedford requires two different permits, the costs for which vary depending on the residential or commercial designation of the property. The attached report is divided by fiscal year and by permit type.

BUILDING TYPE	BUILDING PERMIT FEE	SITE PLAN REVIEW	ELECTRICAL PERMIT FEE
RESIDENTIAL	\$50	\$125	3% of the contract
COMMERCIAL	\$300	\$125	3% of the contract

All though the City began issuing solar permits as early as 2010, the Inspectional Services Department did not fully implement View Permit (our data collection software) until 2014. Data prior to that cannot be verified. The attached report provides history dating back to the beginning of FY 2015, which is the most accurate and consistent data available.

In all, the report includes 2,297 permits, 1,189 of which are building and 1,108 of which are electrical, totaling \$968,428 in revenue. Building permits make up approximately 23% of the revenue generated by solar permits and electrical permits generate 77% of solar revenue generation. The peak of private invest in solar power occurred in the City in 2016 but has remained mostly consistent for the last three fiscal years.

FISCAL YEAR	SOLAR (BUILDING) PERMITS	SOLAR (BUILDING) REVENUE	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) PERMITS	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) REVENUE	TOTAL PERMITS	TOTAL REVENUE
FY 2015	286	\$52,825	258	\$128,995	544	\$181,820
FY 2016	442	\$78,677	439	\$233,609	881	\$312,286
FY 2017	207	\$39,225	166	\$127,472	373	\$166,697
FY 2018	127	\$23,605	117	\$108,691	244	\$132,296
FY 2019 (THRU 5.15.19)	127	\$25,325	128	\$150,004	255	\$175,329
TOTAL	1,189	\$219,657	1,108	\$748,771	2,297	\$968,428

Commercial and Residential Solar Permits Broken Down

Only 3% of the total solar permits issued were issued to commercial properties, however they represent 28% of the revenue collected. 97% of all solar permits issued were for residential properties, which represents 72% of revenue collected from solar projects.

FISCAL YEAR	SOLAR (BUILDING) PERMITS	SOLAR (BUILDING) REVENUE	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) PERMITS	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) REVENUE	TOTAL PERMITS	TOTAL REVENUE
COMM FY 2015	10	\$4,350	4	\$10,261	14	\$14,611
COMM FY 2016	6	\$2,550	7	\$61,775	13	\$64,325
COMM FY 2017	3	\$1,150	10	\$73,529	13	\$74,679
COMM FY 2018	6	\$2,550	12	\$57,437	18	\$59,987
COMM FY 2019	12	\$5,100	8	\$52,721	20	\$57,821
TOTAL	37	\$15,700	41	\$255,723	78	\$271,423

FISCAL YEAR	SOLAR (BUILDING) PERMITS	SOLAR (BUILDING) REVENUE	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) PERMITS	SOLAR (ELECTRICAL) REVENUE	TOTAL PERMITS	TOTAL REVENUE
RES FY 2015	276	\$48,475	254	\$118,734	530	\$167,209
RES FY 2016	436	\$76,127	432	\$171,834	868	\$247,961
RES FY 2017	204	\$38,075	156	\$53,942	360	\$92,017
RES FY 2018	121	\$21,055	105	\$51,254	226	\$72,309
RES FY 2019	115	\$20,225	120	\$97,284	235	\$117,509
TOTAL	1,152	\$203,957	1,067	\$493,049	2,219	\$697,006

Instructions for reading and understanding the report:

- The report is divided first by fiscal year and then by permit type (building/electrical). The permit types are further sorted by date issued. They do not appear in alphabetical order.
- You may notice in a limited number of cases a date listed as 1/1/1900. There are several reasons the report could have populated the date that way, including that the permit has been paid for but remains in a “temporary” status until it is officially issued. The permits inclusion in this report is accurate according to its naming convention.
- You will notice a vary of permit categories within the column “Permit For”. Prior to FY 2019, the Inspectional Services Department did not have dedicated codes in the View Permit software that identified solar electrical permits. Between FY 2015 – 2018 the department also used the category “Services” for that purpose. As of FY 2019, the department has fully adopted use of the commercial and residential solar categories.

Thank you for your consideration of this information and please don’t hesitate to contact my office with any questions.