



City of New Bedford
IN COMMITTEE

April 28, 2022

The Honorable City Council
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

The Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods at a Meeting held on Thursday, April 21, 2022, considered a COMMUNICATION, Councillor Gomes, submitting a communication from Hank Turgeon, President, New Bedford Police Union, relative to the defunding of the Police Department and the Police Union's proposed budget cuts. (Ref'd 10/08/2020)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take "No Further Action" on the COMMUNICATION, Councillor Gomes, submitting a communication from Hank Turgeon, President, New Bedford Police Union, relative to the defunding of the Police Department and the Police Union's proposed budget cuts. This motion passed on a voice vote.

IN COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY &
NEIGHBORHOODS

Brian K. Gomes

Councillor Brian K. Gomes, Chairman

BKG/at



NEW BEDFORD POLICE UNION
P.O. Box 51534
New Bedford MA 02745



The City of New Bedford Police Department recently sent out a press release hyping two training classes that the New Bedford Police Officers are attending: Blue Courage and Polish The Badge.

While the Union welcomes the idea of any de-escalation classes, cultural diversity programs, dealing with persons with mental health issues and any other program about working with the general public, the release mistakenly states, "Both subjects are critical to success as a police officer and in the ability to interpret the practices of de-escalation and duty to intervene." Numerous Officers that have attended the classes report that these classes have nothing to do with de-escalation. It is obvious that the Chief is only using the currently popular phrase "de-escalation" to appeal to the public's concerns.

These two classes are self-help programs that do offer some training, but at a time when Mayor Mitchell and Chief Cordeiro are defunding the police and reducing the number of police officers that are keeping the City of New Bedford safe these classes are a luxury that the City cannot afford. The combined cost for these two training classes is approximately \$50,000 which does not include the thousands of dollars that have been spent on police officers forced on overtime to backfill for the police officers who are required to attend the classes despite the Union warning the City about the increased cost of forced overtime.

Over the past few months, the New Bedford Police Union has given the City alternative cuts in the police budget, eliminating fat, non-essential positions, training classes and a meditation program. In total, these cuts can save hundreds of thousands of dollars, but the City and Chief refused to listen to us. Instead, the City is moving forward with reductions in the number of police officers, putting the City, our citizens, our neighborhoods and our Police Officers in jeopardy.

The Chief's unnecessary projects should be deferred until the City is in a financially secure position. Curiously, members of the New Bedford Police Union have been denied training that would be paid for by the individual officers at no cost to the City.

Please contact the Mayor and your City Councilors and demand that the Mayor not defund the Police or reduce the number of Police Officers answering the 90,000 plus dispatched calls a year. Instead, urge him to adopt the cuts to the budget that the Union has proposed.

Respectfully,
Hank Turgcon
President
New Bedford Police Union

Sent from my iPhone