

## **AFSCME Local 851**

**908 Purchase St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New Bedford, MA 02740**



November 13, 2022

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

To the New Bedford City Council

Ian Abreu, President

Naomi Carney

Shane Burgo

Brian Gomes

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William Markey

Maria Giesta

Hugh Dunn

Derek Baptiste

Scott Lima

Ryan Pereira

Good morning,

We are AFCME Local 851, we are the boots on the ground keeping your streets clean, safe and functioning. We are tired, physically and mentally not only because we are short staffed, but because the City of New Bedford has not valued our hard work to keep this city going. Without the long running 30 plus year serving union workers, many new Unit C workers would not be able to understand just exactly how the City works. We are few but mighty and its time we get our share.

Let me shed some light on what it's like to be a union worker for the City of New Bedford. You must live in this beautiful City but cannot not afford to live in it. The average rent is between \$1,575 to \$2,345. According to livingcost.org, New Bedford's' average cost of living is ranked top 4% of the most expensive cities in the world! \$2087 and that's including rent and for just one person. Now if you were a union worker with a family double that cost of living. A building custodian, who is responsible to keeping all our city building cleaned inside and out is paid \$16.39 an EMT that has the responsibility to keep someone alive on an emergency is paid \$16.37/hr. Let's do the math, on average a EMT starting at the

City of New Bedford will make gross \$1,309. take out medical and dental \$318, \$991 can't forget those taxes, \$117 = \$874. Oh wait, did I mention that was bi-weekly pay, so well double it just so we can see what's left at the end of the month. \$1,748. Oh yea, that rent, I'll even reduce it to \$1,300 a month. \$448 for the monthly expenses. Groceries for me and my family is about \$220 a week I don't even have enough to cover that or car payment or cell phone bill. SO WHY ON EARTH WOULD ANYONE WANT TO MOVE TO NEW BEDFORD TO WORK HERE IF THEY CANNOT LIVE HERE TO WORK?!?! Once again, I'll use an EMT for my example, someone who's lives are in their hands, why is their base pay \$16.37. Why does the City of New Bedford tell the boots on the ground they cannot afford to pay us more money but yet those who are able to afford living in this City can get a 20% jump raise if this is passed? The Union has tried time and time again to get just enough for those who are at the bottom pay scale to make it somewhat manageable for us to LIVE!

The Mayor's proposal for Unit C positions to get this raise is the exact reason why the Union deserve the same respect. We are asking City Council not only to deny this but to allow the fund to be used for the hard-working Union members, to finally get some people who can live and work for the City. If we save this money for the Union contract instead, Unit C employees only reap will receive the same % increase for them as well. Mayor Mitchell we only received a portion of what our Union JAQ told us we should get for competitive wage scale based on surrounding cities and towns. Do we not deserve the rest? We're only asking for us to be able to survive in a City we are required to live in.

Thank you for your time.  
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