



*City of New Bedford*  
IN COMMITTEE

December 6, 2022

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

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

The Committee on Finance at a Meeting held on Thursday, November 17, 2022, considered a COMMUNICATION Council President Abreu, submitting a Communication from Billy Sylvia, President, New Bedford Firefighters, Local 841, requesting support for our retirees and their families by voting in favor of the increase to the COLA base. (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance.) (Ref'd 10/13/2022)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take "No Further Action" on the COMMUNICATION Council President Abreu, submitting a Communication from Billy Sylvia, President, New Bedford Firefighters, Local 841, requesting support for our retirees and their families by voting in favor of the increase to the COLA base. This motion passed on a voice vote.

IN COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

*William Brad Markey*  
Councillor William Brad Markey, Chairman

WBM: dmb



# NEW BEDFORD FIREFIGHTERS

## LOCAL 841

Affiliate IAFF, PFFM, AFL-CIO, and GSMLC

Billy Sylvia  
President  
Kevin Cormier  
Vice President  
Artie Mello  
Secretary  
Derek DaCosta  
Treasurer

October 6, 2022

Dear New Bedford City Council,

The New Bedford Retirement Board is presenting a COLA base increase per M.G.L. Chapter 32, Section 103. I write this letter asking for your support in helping City retirees and their families.

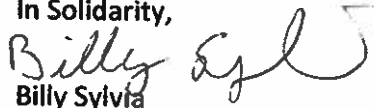
Currently the COLA base is \$12,000 which was adopted by the Council in 1998, almost 25 years ago. We can all acknowledge that times and basic living expenses have changed exponentially since then. Additionally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years has increased costs in all aspects of life including groceries, utilities, and healthcare to name a few. Numbers supplied by the New Bedford Retirement System show that almost half of current retiree pensions are less than \$25,000 per year. Imagine surviving on this amount or close to it in this day and age. The burden of living increases has put an unfair strain on retirees and their families that are already stretched thin to pay for their homes, healthcare, prescriptions, etc.

In 2010 Massachusetts passed legislation that allowed retirement systems to increase the COLA base up to \$18,000. Since then, most systems have increased the base to a higher rate. Out of 102 retirement systems, New Bedford is one of twelve that remains at the same \$12,000 base from more than two decades ago.

The increase presented by the Retirement Board is fair and reasonable. The majority of retirement systems in the state that have made increases, have set their COLA base at \$14,000. The same amount that the board has requested. Some have increased it even more. This increase will provide \$5 more a month to a retiree's pension. The Retirees of New Bedford need and deserve this increase. They worked hard for this City to help make what we call home today, and did so for fair wages in return.

Please support our Retirees and their families and vote in favor for the increase to the COLA base.

In Solidarity,

  
Billy Sylvia

President

New Bedford Firefighters

Local 841

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NEWBEDFORDFIREFIGHTERS.COM