

# Massachusetts Police officer sentenced for punching man in custody multiple times without justification

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BOSTON – A former Weymouth Police officer was sentenced today for assaulting a man in custody by punching the victim multiple times without legal justification.

Justin Chappell, 43, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs to two years' supervised release, with the first six months to be served in home confinement. Chappell was also ordered to complete 40 hours of community service per year of supervised release, for a total of 80 hours. In April 2024, Chappell pleaded guilty to one count of deprivation of rights under color of law.

On July 2, 2022, Chappell was a police officer for the Weymouth Police Department. While on duty, he responded to a call regarding an allegedly intoxicated man causing a disturbance at a home in Weymouth. Chappell placed the man under arrest, and while attempting to put the man in the police cruiser, Chappell punched the man approximately 13 times with a closed fist without legal justification. The punches caused obvious pain and visible injuries to the man's head.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Weymouth Police Department and the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Torey B. Cummings and Neil J.

Gallagher Jr. of the Criminal Division prosecuted the case.”-  
Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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# **New Bedford's Business Improvement District (BID) Petition Withdrawn**

According to a letter New Bedford City Council Linda Morad released to the press, the organizers attempting to set up a Businesses Improvement District in downtown New Bedford has been withdrawn. You can read the letter here:



## City of New Bedford

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**Linda M. Morad**  
Councillor at Large  
City Council President  
2016, 2018, 2019 & 2023

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS  
JULY 16, 2024**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Councillor At Large Linda M. Morad  
Telephone Number: 508-995-8009**

### **NEW CITY AMERICA BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT PETITION**

City Councillor and Finance Committee Chairperson Linda Morad has received a letter from the New City America Business Improvement District (B.I.D) petitioners who have requested they be allowed to withdraw the B.I.D document originally presented to the New Bedford City Council in February 2024.

This letter will be presented to the City Council Finance Committee at the meeting scheduled for Monday, July 22, 2024. At the meeting, the members of the Finance Committee will officially receive the request to withdraw the B.I.D. petition and the Finance Committee will take the required action to dismiss the petition. Should the Finance Committee decide to move forward with the necessary action to allow the withdrawal and dismissal of the B.I.D. petition there will be no need for additional public input at the July 22, 2024 meeting.

Councillor Morad expressed her thanks to the members of the New City America Executive Board for their cooperation in working with members of the City Council on this complex project, to the residents and business owners who have voiced their opinions at the public meetings regarding this project and the various City of New Bedford departments that have worked diligently to review the petition and supporting paperwork.

Screenshot

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**Massachusetts To Receive  
\$1.72 Billion in Federal**

# Funding for Cape Cod Bridges

Today, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, Congressman Bill Keating, and Governor Maura Healey announced they have secured a total of \$1.72 billion for the replacement of the Cape Cod bridges. This is in response to last week's announcement that Massachusetts was awarded nearly \$1 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Bridge Investment Program (BIP). This builds on the previously won \$372 million from the federal Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant program, in addition to \$350 million secured by the congressional delegation from FY24 appropriations. Governor Healey has also committed \$700 million in state funds to the project.

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## Vineyard Wind Searching Nantucket Beaches For Blade Debris

By Chris Lisinski, State House News Service

Vineyard Wind will deploy teams to search Nantucket's southern beaches for any debris that has washed ashore after one of its offshore wind turbine blades was damaged.

The company announced Tuesday morning that it would embark on new efforts to clean up pieces of fiberglass that might land on Nantucket and, with the help of the U.S. Coast Guard, maintain a "safety zone" of 500 meters around the impacted turbine about 15 miles away from the islands.

Vineyard Wind still has not publicly identified what caused the problem, describing it only as a “blade damage incident that took place on Saturday, July 13, 2024.” A spokesperson for the company said Monday that GE, which manufactured and installed the turbine blades, is investigating.

So far, the company said Tuesday, crews have recovered “three large fragments” from the damaged turbine blade. The Nantucket Current published photos Monday evening of larger turbine pieces floating in the water.

Vineyard Wind plans to continue monitoring the offshore area with “aerial overflights and vessel patrols” to monitor for any additional floating debris.

Any blade pieces that could land on Nantucket’s southern beaches will likely be “pieces 1 square foot or less,” Vineyard Wind said. The company urged any beachcombers not to move debris themselves and instead to contact Ian Campbell at (781) 983-8943 or [icampbell@vineyardwind.com](mailto:icampbell@vineyardwind.com), or to report the location online.

“The debris consists of non-toxic fiberglass fragments ranging in size from small pieces to larger sections, typically green or white in color,” Vineyard Wind said, adding, “Although the fiberglass fragments are not hazardous to people or the environment, Vineyard Wind recommends that only its employees or contractors collect and remove the debris.”

Search teams will inspect beaches in the morning and evening, with plans to visit Miacomet Beach, Nobadeer Beach, Madequecham Beach, Pebble Beach, Tom Nevers Beach, Low Beach and Sconset Beach “or other areas where debris may wash ashore.” The company will deploy two teams of four people each for “several days.”

Vineyard Wind, the joint venture between energy giant Avangrid and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners, is the first major offshore wind project delivering power to the regional energy

grid. So far, the 10 operational turbines are delivering 136 megawatts, and project officials plan to ramp that up to 62 turbines offering a combined 806 megawatts.

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## **City of New Bedford performs 33 clean-ups of blighted properties**

“When landlords allow their properties to fall into disrepair and become blight on the neighborhood, the City may come in after necessary notice and clean the property, and then place a lien on it. In Fiscal 2024, the City performed 33 of these clean-ups and placed \$31,763.34 worth of tax liens against the owners.

In June, for instance, the City performed clean-ups at four properties across the City, placing a combined \$3,575.39 in tax liens against the property owners. The cleanups were located at:

- South Side Scott Street Parcel 20 268 – \$1,074.40 liened to owner Ali Murad in Buffalo
- 13 Durfee St. Parcel 77 375 – \$1,106 liened to SUMDRU Inc., President Anthony Cristaldi
- 1227 Ashley Blvd. – \$519.44 liened to Daniel and Tracy Schrier of Schrier Living Trust in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.
- 558 Mt. Pleasant St. – \$875.55 liened to Leisure Industries C/O Mike Rocha in Fairhaven

While the vast majority of landlords in New Bedford maintain

and care for their properties, the City will continue to hold irresponsible absentee landlords accountable for letting their properties turn into neighborhood blight.”-City of New Bedford.

**All photos by the City of New Bedford:**



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## **Bristol County Sheriff wants to close New Bedford’s “money pit”, Ash St. jail**

“Due to some falling bricks and other easily observable façade issues, in order to get an annual occupancy permit, the BCSO was ordered by the district state building inspector to have a structural engineer assess the Ash Street Jail in New Bedford. My administration complied with that order.

The report below provided to the BCSO report shows that

the **band-aid fix is about \$35,000.**

However, to properly fix the structural issues with Ash St. **is over \$3.8 million.**

It would not make sense to spend \$3.8 million on a facility that costs us about \$5 million a year to run. It makes more sense to consolidate resources at the Dartmouth jail campus.

On 18 June, 2024, I asked the state delegation of Reps and Senators who represent all or some of Bristol County to support a several phase plan to close Ash Street. That email is copied at the bottom of this email.

State Representative Chris Markey quickly told me that he would file what is needed to make the plan to close Ash St a reality. Other Reps and Senators have also pledged their support.

The steps to close Ash St and the benefits of closing the Ash Street Jail are detailed in my email to the state delegation, found below.

Let me know if

- 1) You have any questions, or
- 2) Want a tour of Ash St to see the issues, or
- 3) Want a tour of the Dartmouth jail to see where the regional detainees would be held after the retrofitting.”-Sheriff Paul Heroux.

**REPORT:**

“Hello, State Senators and State Representatives,

I am writing to you today asking for your assistance in **closing Ash Street jail** in New Bedford; it is a money pit and taking resources away from the Dartmouth campus.



The Ash Street jail has three types of people: 1) regional detainees, 2) sentenced inmates, and 3) awaiting trial inmates. I cannot close Ash Street unless I bring all three categories back to Dartmouth due to staffing issues.

The general plan follows the following steps.

1. **Receive appropriation from the state to hire a firm to redesign a retrofit for an unused kitchen on the campus in Dartmouth to accommodate the *regional detainees* who are currently held at the Ash St jail.**

a. Why do we need to do this? The unused kitchen would be retrofitted to put 'holding cells' to be used only for the *regional detainees*. A *regional detainee* is a person arrested by a local police department, delivered to us, and then held at my jail on Ash St in New Bedford in the *regional lock up* and held until the detainee can appear before a judge in court the next business day. We hold *regional detainees* for 19 of the 20 cities and towns in Bristol County who routinely utilize our *regional lock up*. We need to relocate this operation from New Bedford to Dartmouth in order to improve safety and save money.

2. With the new design in hand, we now also have a dollar amount on how much the retrofit would cost, which our in-house estimate is around \$3-4 million.

3. **Receive second appropriation from the state to build the regional detainee holding cells.** This is done by a private contractor with DCAMM oversight. There is no net gain in cells.

4. Move the

a. 10-20 or so 'regional detainee operation' to the newly constructed cells in Dartmouth.

b. 80 or so regular inmates from Ash St to Dartmouth and

put them in existing unused housing units in Dartmouth.

5. **Close Ash Street jail and regional lock up**, and turn it back over to the state for sale to a private developer or some other yet to be determined use.

The estimated costs for this project are modest for the gains we get.

## **COSTS**

Retrofit design done by a firm – **approximately \$750,000**

Construction of the new regional lock up at the Dartmouth campus – **approximately \$3-4 million**

## **RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

**\$700,000** each year won't be spent on utilities and other maintenance at Ash St in New Bedford

**\$2-5 million** for the sale of Ash St to a private developer

## **SAFETY ASPECTS**

By relocating the *regional lock up detainees* (and the regular inmates) to the Dartmouth Jail, we bring 45-50 COs who regularly work at Ash Street New Bedford to the Dartmouth campus. By consolidating the security operation on one campus, we increase the security staff to inmate ratio, and we increase the amount of programming available to inmates at the Dartmouth campus, which helps with reentry decreasing recidivism. There is NO NET gain in cells; this plan reduces the number of BCSO cells by nearly 200.

**SUMMARY – I am asking for your financial support to help me close Ash Street 1) in order to improve safety for all involved, and 2) save the state money by operating more efficiently on one campus.**

If anyone or a group of you would like a tour of the

facilities so you can better visualize the plan, let me know and we'll arrange a tour. Please call me if you have any questions or want to talk about this.

Sheriff Heroux.”

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# Southcoast Health welcomes new providers for New Bedford, Fall River, Fairhaven, Wareham, Swansea

FAIRHAVEN, FALL RIVER, MIDDLETOWN, NEW BEDFORD, SWANSEA and WAREHAM – Southcoast Health is pleased to announce the not-for-profit community health system welcomed five new providers in June. These providers are joining various specialties including, Family Medicine, the Hospitalist Program, Internal Medicine, and Medical Weight Loss.



**Brian Bonenfant, PA**  
*Family Medicine*

**Jessica Fisher, NP**  
*Family Medicine*

**Meagan Hajjar, MD**  
*Hospitalist*

**Alexander Rabin, MD**  
*Medical Weight Loss*

**Nada Zaknoun, MD**  
*Internal Medicine*

## **Brian Bonenfant, PA | Family Medicine**

**479 Swansea Mall Drive, Swansea, MA**

Brian Bonenfant completed his Master of Health Professions and Physician's Assistant Certification at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. He gained experience as a Medical Service Specialist and Emergency Medical Technician while serving in the United States Air Force. Brian has been with Southcoast Health for six years and is now starting a position at Southcoast Health Family Medicine in Swansea while maintaining a secondary position at Southcoast Health Urgent Care.

## **Jessica Fisher, NP | Family Medicine**

**672 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI**

Jessica Fisher earned her Master of Science in Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner from the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, Rhode Island. She is now joining Southcoast Health Family Medicine in Middletown, Rhode Island.

## **Meagan Hajjar, MD | Hospitalist**

Dr. Meagan Hajjar earned her Doctor of Medicine at the University of Medicine and Health Sciences-St. Kitts in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Dr. Hajjar completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Connecticut, in Farmington, Connecticut. She is now starting a position as a Hospitalist caring for patients at all three Southcoast Health hospital locations.

## **Alexander Rabin, MD | Medical Weight Loss**

**100 Rosebrook Way, Wareham, MA**

Dr. Alexander Rabin received his Doctor of Medicine from the Saint Petersburg Academy of Medicine and Pediatrics, formerly the Leningrad State Pediatric Medical Institute, located in

Saint Petersburg, Russia. He furthered his medical education in the United States and completed an internship and residency in Internal Medicine at the North Shore Medical Center in Salem, Massachusetts. He now joins Southcoast Health Medical Weight Loss.

**Nada Zaknoun, MD | Internal Medicine**

*208 Mill Road, Fairhaven, MA*

Dr. Nada Zaknoun earned her Doctor of Medicine from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest, Romania. She completed a residency in Internal Medicine at Sinai Hospital of Detroit, in Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Zaknoun now joins Southcoast Health Internal Medicine in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

Southcoast Health is delighted to welcome Brian Bonenfant, Jessica Fisher, Dr. Meagan Hajjar, Dr. Alexander Rabin and Dr. Nada Zaknoun to our organization.

Their addition to our team is a testament to our commitment to providing exceptional care and service across the South Coast region.

To learn more about our Southcoast Health providers please visit [www.southcoast.org/doctors/](http://www.southcoast.org/doctors/) or call 1-844-744-5544.

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**About Southcoast Health**

Founded in 1996, Southcoast Health serves communities across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke’s in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham, Massachusetts with a physician network of more than 675

providers.

The system has established more than 55 service locations across the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including six urgent care locations, a Visiting Nurse Association, the Southcoast Health Cancer Center, the region's only Level II Adult Trauma Center and numerous ancillary facilities.

Southcoast Health has been recognized consecutively for six years in a row as a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital from 2019-2024 and named a Maternity Care Access Hospital for 2023-2024 by U.S. News & World Report. The organization was recognized as the best place to work for the sixth consecutive year by Southcoast Media Group's community choice awards.

With upward of 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in southeastern Massachusetts, and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. More information is available online at [www.southcoast.org](http://www.southcoast.org).

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## **New Bedford Firefighters respond to County Street structure fire**

"Yesterday evening at 6:40pm, the Nbfd responded to 104 County Street for a reported structure fire with smoke showing from the north side of the building.

This mixed use wood frame structure contains three apartments above a first floor commercial space. On arrival, a room and

contents fire was discovered in a 4th floor bedroom.

The fire was quickly extinguished by Engine 6. There was no extension into the attic space above the bedroom and no injuries were reported at the scene.

The building is protected by a working fire alarm system. The fire was investigated by the Nbfd Fire Investigation Unit and the cause is accidental.”-New Bedford Fire Department.



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& MORE



*New Bedford Fire Department photo.*



*New Bedford Fire Department photo.*

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# **New Bedford Fire Dept. chaplain Mike Racine blesses the newest apparatus**

“New Bedford Fire Department chaplain Mike Racine blessed the

department's newest apparatus this afternoon.

We ordered it in the middle of the pandemic (before they became much more expensive), and it just arrived.

This is a top model which will make our firefighters more effective at their work and safer in their workplace.”-Mayor Jon Mitchell.



*City of New Bedford Fire Department photo.*



*Mayor Jon Mitchell photo.*

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## **New Bedford Police respond to “shots fired” on Acushnet Ave near Monte’s Park**

On Sunday, at approximately at 9 p.m., New Bedford Police received 911 calls for a shooting call at Acushnet Ave and Russell St. near Monte’s Park.

Upon arrival, responding officers spoke with eyewitnesses that stated three people were shot in the incident and that they had left the scene to race to St. Luke’s Hospital.

Over the years, the Monte’s Park area has been a frequent site of gun and knife violence and is considered a “problem area.”

This incident comes on the heels of a shooting at Monte's Park that left several injured just a week ago.