

New Bedford Election Prediction #2: Chris Boerl will challenge the at-Large “bubble” incumbent

As the 2017 New Bedford election cycle comes to a close on November 7th, it's time to make a few predictions. I won't predict any of the candidate winners because some will perceive the predictions as endorsements and I'll have to deal with verbal beatings that will follow. Making scientific predictions based on data isn't acceptable to some even if the predictions come true – they will make the chicken and egg argument and I'd rather not deal with it.

Check out my first prediction that **turnout will be 23%**.

My second prediction is that Chris Boerl will make a real challenge to the at-Large “bubble” incumbent.

The at-Large city council and school committee races are different than standard elections – you get to vote for multiple people and there are multiple winners. For at-Large, five candidates win a seat on the city council and it's arguable the most difficult election for a non-incumbent to win. Generally, an incumbent has to retire for someone new to become an at-Large councilor like in the case where Ian Abreu replaced David Alves in 2015. You have to go back to 2011 when Naomi Carney knocked John Saunders out of the top five to see an incumbent replaced in an election. That was the “44% pay raise” election where Saunders stated, “If people don't like the job I'm doing, they can vote me out.” They voted him out and moved Carney in.

Of the non-incumbent candidates, Chris Boerl will likely generate significant votes. The only question that arises is

who is the bubble candidate – the incumbent most vulnerable and who will get the least amount of votes of the five incumbents? Has any of the incumbents opened themselves up like Saunders? As recent history has shown, non-incumbents can hope to finish 5th, but moving much higher isn't likely. In reality, at-Large really is a two person race, the strongest non-incumbent against the weakest incumbent.

My prediction is that Chris Boerl will finish with a sizable amount of votes, finishing 5th or 6th.