

# **New Bedford Mayor Mitchell: City Council cuts are deeply concerning**

Mayor Mitchell released the following statement on the New Bedford City Council's cuts to the FY21 Budget:

"In developing the Fiscal Year 2021 budget, my administration sought to reduce spending that was not sustainable in light of the economic fallout of the pandemic, without materially compromising the ability of city government to deliver the services our residents expect and deserve. As I explained in my budget address last month, while we had to make some difficult decisions, the budget we submitted to the City Council achieved this delicate balance, and was the product of a deliberate, careful review of municipal operations.

"The City Council's further cuts last night to this already bare-bones budget are deeply concerning. The Council eliminated numerous positions in city government simply because they happened to be unfilled at this moment, without regard to their roles in the delivery of core municipal services. For instance, the Council eliminated several positions whose purpose is to maintain city buildings and public parks, and to plow snow on key routes. Just a year after a ransomware attack on the city's computer system, the Council nevertheless cut the city's information technology department. As the city attempts to attract new business in the face of a recession, the Council effectively eliminated the marketing and tourism department, and defunded the AHA! program. It also sharply reduced the engineering services necessary to rebuild streets and sidewalks. Moreover, in the midst of a global pandemic, the Council cut the health department by ten percent, and to top it off, cut hundreds of thousands of dollars to the account that pays the electricity

to city buildings – literally, the fund that keeps the lights on in city government.

“These short-sighted reductions are not fiscally conservative, and cannot be implemented without a direct impact on services to our residents. Some may actually reduce the city’s revenue, and others will compromise public health, security, and the City’s ability to pay its bills. The City’s financial team will work in the coming weeks to assess and mitigate the long-term consequences of these cuts.”