

City of New Bedford and Police Department will adopt recommendations of Commission on Police Use of Force Policies

Mayor Jon Mitchell today announced that the City and New Bedford Police Department will implement the recommendations of the Commission on the New Bedford Police Department's Use of Force Policies, consistent with state law and the NBPD's collective bargaining agreement.

The members of the Commission were drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds and lived experiences. Together they met weekly over the course of six months, held two public hearings and made ongoing requests to the public for feedback on the policies.

In its report, the Commission recommended measures in the Department's policies that would strengthen the following concepts across all three policies by:

- Providing substantive guidance on de-escalation for tense situations throughout the Department's policies
- Including a 'duty to report' clause in the Department's use of force policies, whereby officers must report violations of the policy and other appropriate actions during their duty
- Including a 'duty to intervene' obligation, whereby officers must intervene in any instance of excessive force by a fellow officer
- Requiring training and demonstrated proficiency on use of force policies, as well as training on implicit bias, cultural competency, and working with individuals with mental illness

and autism

- Providing an annual analysis and summary of use of force instances that is made available to the public

The Commission was established by Mayor Mitchell in June; at that time, the Mayor signed on to the Obama Foundation's Mayor's Pledge, which called on mayors across the United States to commit to reviewing use of force policies, engaging the community for its input, reporting the findings of the review, and reforming community police use of force policies. The Commission's recommendations, as well as related recommendations, observations and concerns made by the Commission, will be adopted by the Department consistent with the Department's collective bargaining agreement and state law.

On a related note, Chief Joseph Cordeiro has announced that he is rescinding the former High Energy Patrol Initiative directive, superseded by the Department's Walk and Talk directive and community policing philosophy, effective today.

Mayor Jon Mitchell noted, "I am grateful to the members of the Commission for their time and dedication in reviewing the Police Department's use of force policies. NBPD is an effective police department, whose work in recent years has led to significant reductions in crime and a strengthening of the public's trust. But we know that trust requires continuous nurturing, and that a successful police department is one that seeks always to improve itself. The Commission's recommendations will enable the Department to upgrade its use of force practices and will bolster its legitimacy in the eyes of the public."

"The success of modern policing is dependent on positive collaboration and an inclusive partnership with the community. This is a continuum in relationship-building and mutual trust, which is a foundational tenet of our community policing philosophy," said Chief Cordeiro.

The Commission's members included:

- City Councilor Brian K. Gomes (Chair), Chair of the, City Council Committee on Public Safety
- John G. "Buddy" Andrade, Director of the Old Bedford Village Development Corp.
- Marcus Brito-Barros, an organizer of the Black Lives Matter protests in New Bedford
- City Councilor Naomi R. A. Carney
- Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director of the Immigrants Assistance Center
- Chuck DiChiara, Massachusetts Police Training Institute
- Hon. Armand Fernandes, retired Associate Justice, Massachusetts Trial Court
- Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Rev. Ramiro Monteiro, International Church of the Nazarene, New Bedford
- Deputy Chief Paul Oliveira, New Bedford Police Department
- Marcelina Pina-Christian, Chair of the New Bedford Human Relations Commission
- Rita Ribeiro, retired New Bedford Police Department sergeant and School Committee member for Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
- Maria Rosario, Executive Director of Northstar Learning Center
- Bruce Rose, former President, New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Robert Schilling, criminal defense attorney
- Andrea Sheppard Lomba, Director of United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Peter Silva, designee of the New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Sowa, Bristol County District Attorney's Office
- Hank Turgeon, President of the New Bedford Police Union
- Noah Williams, New Bedford High School Class of 2017 alumnus and current student at Georgetown University