

# Running for New Bedford Public Office in 2015



by  
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In the November 6th, 2012 general state elections, nine out of ten South Coast Massachusetts candidates ran unopposed. In the **2013 New Bedford municipal elections**, Mayor Jon Mitchell ran unopposed as did three of the six ward city councilors, the assessor and a school committee seat. Only three out of eleven races saw any real competition and that's counting the At-Large city council race that is competitive by default. Voter turn out was 10,145 of 54,353 registered voters, or 18.67%. Basically, 10% of the city decided the election of mostly unopposed races. Full 2013 election results [here](#).

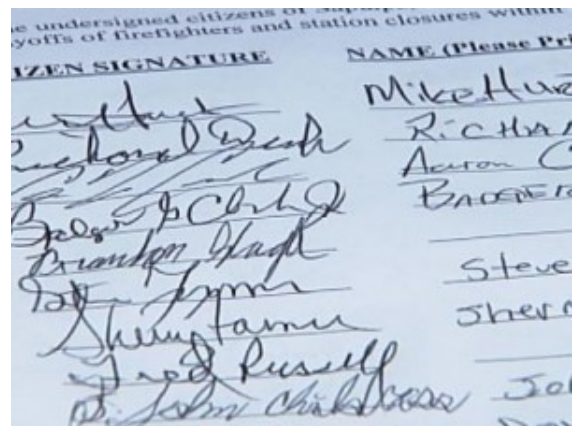
There may be numerous reasons for the lack of candidates running for office, but in my opinion, the citizens of New Bedford deserve to be given a choice between several qualified candidates for all elected, political offices. The process to become a candidate for a New Bedford office is simple, but there are strict requirements and timelines that must be fulfilled.

It is important that potential candidates understand the election cycle timeline, the requirements to get on the ballot, the rules established by the election commission, and the office positions available. Your number one resource is Maria Tomasia at the New Bedford elections office. She can be reached at (508) 979-1420.

## New Bedford Elections 101

Unlike state and national elections, local elections are non-partisan. This means there are no parties involved or attached to a candidate (i.e. Democrats versus Republicans).

By law, preliminary elections are held on the fourth Tuesday preceding the final city elections that will be on **November 3th, 2015**. This means that all qualified candidates are voted on by registered voters in a preliminary election on **October 6th**. The top two finishers move on to the final municipal election on 3 **November, 2013**. The winner of the Municipal Election is sworn in and serves office on **1 Jan, 2016**.



You must get at least 70 signatures to run for a New Bedford Office.

## Candidate Requirements

All persons wanting to run for public office in New Bedford must fill out and submit official nomination papers to the Board of Election Commissioners. These nomination papers are available on **May 22nd, 2015** and must be filled out completely, correctly and have signatures of at least 70 registered voters on it. The deadline to turn these papers in is **September 2nd**. While the requirement is fifty signatures, registrars are required by law to certify 2/5th more than the number of signatures required. Why? Because signatures can be disallowed either in the certification process or through challenges. My suggestion is to get at least 100 signatures and follow these

rules:

- The person signing must be a registered voter.
- Make sure the person signing fills out their correct name and it matches the name they used to register to vote.
- Make sure the name is legible and signed in pen.
- Make sure the signer includes their present address and not mailing addresses, like P.O. boxes.
- No nicknames or initials.
- Voters can sign for multiple candidates so don't be fooled into thinking a person can only sign for one candidate.
- Candidates running for Councilor At-Large seats can get signatures in any ward within the city. Ward candidates must get signatures from the residents in the specific ward they reside in and want to represent. New Bedford Ward maps can be found **here**.



## 2015 New Bedford Election Timetable

- May 22th: Nomination papers become available at the New Bedford City Hall – First day on which nomination papers can be obtained from the office of the Board of Election Commissioners for Mayor, School Committee, Assessor and City Council. Each candidate must sign with Board of Election Commissioners, before he/she can obtain

papers. A sign up sheet will be available for individuals who wish to take out nomination papers. It will include the name, address, telephone number and office for which the person intends to be a candidate. Anyone other than a candidate must present a signed authorization from the candidate to secure papers on candidate's behalf. Each candidate will be issued five (5) nomination papers.

- Aug 18th: Last day and hour to submit nomination papers to the Board of Election Commissioners for certification of signatures. (5:00 PM)
- Sep 2nd: The last day to officially file nomination papers (5:00 PM)
- Sep 4th: The last day to withdraw from race or object to nomination papers (5:00 PM)
- Sept 16th: Last day to register to vote for Preliminary Elections
- Sept 28th: Last day & hour for candidates for Assessor and School Committee to file Campaign Finance Reports with the Board of Election Commissioners.
- Oct 3th: Absentee Voting Absentee Voting, City Hall, Room 114 (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)
- Oct 5th: Last day to file an absentee ballot application for Preliminary Election (12:00 PM)
- Oct 6th: **Preliminary Election** (7:00 AM – 8:00 PM) – top two move on to the Municipal Election
- Oct 13th: Last day to file recount petition with Board of Election Commissioners (5:00 PM)
- Oct 14th: Last day to register to vote for Municipal Elections (8:00 PM)
- Oct 26th: Last day and hour for all candidates and Political Committees to file 5:00 P.M. Campaign Finance Reports with the Board of Election Commissioners.
- Oct 31st: 9:00 A.M TO 12 Noon Saturday Absentee Voting, City Hall, Room 114.
- Nov 2nd: Last day to file for an absentee ballot application (12:00 PM)

- Nov 3rd: **Municipal Election** (7:00 AM – 8:00 PM)
- Nov 13th: Last day to file recount petition (5:00 PM)
- Jan, 2012: Winning candidates are sworn into office

### **New Bedford Elected Offices**

There are a total of 16 elected offices in the New Bedford elections.

- **Mayor** – Chief executive of the city.
- **City Council** (11 Seats) – Responsible for setting the city budget and appropriating all funds to run the city. Confirms all mayoral appointments and is responsible for confirming all mayoral appointments. There are two types of city councilors; Councilors-at-Large and Ward Councilors:
  - **Councilors-at-Large** (5 seats)
  - **Ward Councilors** (Wards 1-6)
- **School Committee** (3 seats) – There are seven seats on the school committee; the mayor and six elected officials. Each serve four years and three come up for election every two years.
- **Assessor** – Determine the value of all real and personal property located within the City of New Bedford for taxation purposes.

### **Important Resources:**

- 2015 New Bedford Election Timetable
- 2013 New Bedford Election Results
- 2011 New Bedford Election Page
- 2011 New Bedford Election Results
- The Federal Election Commission
- Massachusetts Elections Division
- New Bedford Elections Commission

### **New Bedford Election Commission**

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Hours: Mon-Thurs 8-4, Fri 8-12

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