



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

March 24, 2021

Councillor Brian K. Gomes
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods
New Bedford City Council
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Councillor Gomes:

I write to address the Public Safety Committee's invitation of the New Bedford Police Department to appear before the Committee tonight concerning several motions about police practices. The invitation named not only Chief Cordeiro, but the president of the police union as well. In my view, it is neither appropriate nor productive to invite a department head and union leader to a public meeting in order to initiate a debate regarding criticisms from a public employee union president about the policies, practices, or operations of a City department. City department heads are the appropriate representatives to address questions about their respective departments and to speak to matters of leadership in their departments.

It is important to me that my administration and department heads continue to have a constructive dialogue with the Council, and to ensure that department heads can be responsive to the Council's questions about their departments. By using this venue to invite a department head and his employees' elected union representative, the Committee would not be providing a forum for a constructive discussion and would instead create a platform for a airing of internal grievances. This is especially concerning now that the police union and the City are in the midst of contract arbitration. For these reasons, the Chief will not participate in today's Committee meeting.

Chief Cordeiro has also reiterated the importance of transparency so as to keep the public informed. In response to the Committee's request for weekly crime reports, the Chief announced that the department will issue a daily crime report and post it on its website. In addition to the daily reports produced by the Police Department, I encourage Councillors with further questions about the operations of the Police Department, including tactics related to the Department's investigation of crimes in the City, and technology used to support the investigation of crimes, to contact Chief Cordeiro directly rather than to discuss tactics relating to solving crime in a public setting where it may jeopardize the

discuss tactics relating to solving crime in a public setting where it may jeopardize the Department's effectiveness in doing so.

The Chief is willing to appear before the Committee and the Committee's convenience, provided the objection raised in this letter is addressed.

Sincerely,

Jon Mitchell

