



# City of New Bedford

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## Office of City Council

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**Shane A. Burgo**

*Councillor At Large*

*City Council President 2025*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

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**DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 11, 2025**

**TOPIC: ENOUGH WITH THE FEAR TACTICS**

As President of the New Bedford City Council, I feel obligated to respond to the Mayor's latest announcement of so called "austerity measures." Once again, he is resorting to his usual doom and gloom tactics to scare the public and deflect attention from his administration's inability to budget responsibly. These are not serious solutions. This is political theater.

Every year, the Mayor throws a tantrum when the Council exercises its rightful authority to rein in overspending. Every year, we are met with fear mongering headlines, service closures, and dramatic claims intended to punish the public for the Council doing its job. But the truth is, we've seen this movie before, and the people of New Bedford deserve better.

Let's talk about the Police Department. The Mayor is making noise about our \$1 million reduction, yet fails to mention that over 20 Police positions remain unfilled, and more Police are expected to retire. The math doesn't lie. Funding for positions that don't exist or won't be filled in this fiscal year only serves to artificially inflate the budget. Taxpayers are being asked to fund salaries that aren't and won't be paid. That's not public safety planning, that's budget padding.

The same can be said about his threat to brown out fire stations due to a cut in overtime. Let's be clear, this minor reduction does not justify shutting down stations. But given the Mayor's long history of hostility toward the Fire Department, it's sadly no surprise he would seize this moment to continue that assault. This is not the conduct of a serious leader. It's the behavior of someone more interested in playing politics than governing effectively.

What's even more dishonest is the way he framed the school budget situation. He conveniently left out that he himself cut nearly \$5 million from the School Department before ever submitting the budget to the Council. Combined with our \$1.7 million adjustment, that's a \$6.7 million reduction, the majority of which came directly from the Mayor.

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PRESS RELEASE

City Council President Shane A. Burgo

From day one, the Council's approach to the school budget has been clear. We would review the finalized state budget, calculate the foundational formula, and restore whatever funding was necessary to meet our net school spending obligation. That has always been the plan, and we are now following through. To act as though the Council is somehow to blame for the need to restore these funds is not only disingenuous, but also deeply misleading.

As we've done in the past, we remain ready and willing to restore funding where it is factually justified. But we will not blindly approve inflated budgets based on hypothetical needs or political pressure. We demand accountability, transparency, and fiscal discipline. Something this administration has consistently failed to deliver.

The Mayor appears to feel very comfortable reaching further and further into the pockets of our taxpaying citizens, even during a time when families across New Bedford are already facing increased costs from every direction. That level of disconnect from the struggles of everyday residents is exactly why this Council remains vigilant.

This Council is paying attention. We are doing the hard work of protecting taxpayer dollars, prioritizing essential services, and holding the administration to a higher standard. That is our job. We won't be bullied out of doing it."

Thank you.