

# 10 people who should run for mayor of New Bedford in 2017

The mayor, or chief executive of the City, wields a lot of power. He or she appoints the chief of police, has major influence on the discretionary part of the \$300 million city budget and has full veto power of the city council. The mayor also appoints most of the city leadership and is the head of the school committee.

While a few people have pulled nomination papers with the intent to run for mayor, only Charlie Perry and Kerry Winterson seem to be serious about a run. At the time of this writing, I'd say Kerry Winterson is not likely to run for office. Candidates have until August 15, 2017 to run in the October and November elections this year.

Here are 10 people that I feel should run for mayor of New Bedford this year ...



**Current Mayor Jon Mitchell**— Mayor Mitchell definitely deserves a shot at re-election. New Bedford has low unemployment,

statistically crime is down and public schools have turned around and continue to move in the right direction. Downtown New Bedford is booming with new businesses and we have a new business park replacing half of the Whaling City Golf Course. The Airport and waterfront are expanding commercially. The south end now has two amazing walking paths along the hurricane barrier (Harborwalk and Covewalk) that will eventually connect to a Riverwalk to form The **Blue Lane** to provide locals with 11 miles of fantastic walking, running and biking.

The current mayor has a strong record, but that doesn't mean he deserves to run unopposed like he did in 2013. Here are 9 other people that should run against him.



**Linda Morad** – Linda is a top-notch leader trapped in a City Council. There are few people in the area that I would recommend for Mayor, State Senate/Representative or even congress. She received the most votes in 2013 and the second most votes in 2015 in the at-Large City Council elections.

While being Republican in New Bedford can immediately hurt your chances of winning any election, it would actually help her. As mentioned, she finishes first or second in total votes for the at-Large races with most people knowing her political party.

Governor Baker is the most popular governor in the United

States and has shown that he is willing to endorse candidates in local elections. He endorsed Jill Marie Ussach in the special Ward 3 election just a few months ago. Additionally, Keiko Orrall is now the Republican National Committee Woman. She is just down the road in Lakeville with strong ties to New Bedford and could be a strong advocate. Money is what would be needed to defeat Jon Mitchell and having a party behind you would help with that.

Additionally, I'm certain she's learned a lot from her failed run for mayor in 2011 and could use the experience to perform better in 2017.

Linda has pulled nomination papers with the intent to run for re-election for at-Large City Council, but that doesn't mean she can't change her mind.



**Kerry Winterson** – During a City Council session this summer, Kerry announced that he would run for mayor. Kerry has already announced that he will not seek re-election for his Ward 5 City Council seat due to personal reasons, but seemed to be



re-energized recently to run against mayor Mitchell. His platform announcement was crime and focusing on the north and south end of New Bedford.

Kerry is a blue-collar man that New Bedford residents would respond to very well. It would make for a great mayor's race as he disagrees with Mayor Mitchell on the core issue of crime, the mayor says crime is down and Kerry feels it isn't. Kerry would also do well with the crowd of people that feel the mayor spends too much of his focus on downtown New Bedford.



**Brian Gomes** – Brian Gomes once ran for mayor, but then 9/11 happened. There are few people with as much passion as Brian in the City Council and you will find him in the community at all the important events – even the ones with no media

coverage.

Brian offers legislation that is not always popular – but no question out-of-the-box thinking. For example, check out his record and you'll see he's pushed for curfews, more cameras and drone use in high crime areas. You'll also see him working minor motions like traffic issues and community events. Brian is consistent, passionate and bleeds New Bedford. It would be great seeing him in debates and in an executive position in the city.

Brian has pulled nomination papers with the intent to run for re-election for at-Large City Council, but that doesn't mean he can't change his mind.



**Henry Bousquet** – You have to respect a man that does good things for the City without getting a paycheck. Due to a bogus state law, Henry was not allowed to collect a check while teaching at GNB Voc-Tech as a culinary instructor and working

as a City Council member. That's roughly \$18,000 a year he gave up for nearly three years (33 months to be exact).

He gave up his ward City Council seat earlier this year and hasn't pulled nomination papers, but he's someone that should run this year or in 2019. He was always a moderate, calm voice in the city council.



**Ian Abreu** – Ian is the Manager of Workforce and Business Development at the South Coast Chamber of Commerce and a freshman at-Large City Councilor. Love his ideas or not, he has put up motions with teeth in his first years in office. He's pushed for medical marijuana and a ban on synthetic marijuana in his first year – real impact proposals. There is no questioning his passion or love for New Bedford and if you follow him on Facebook you know he dedicates a lot of time to constituent services.

Ian has pulled nomination papers with the intent to run for re-election for at-Large City Council, but that doesn't mean



he can't change his mind.



**Former New Bedford Mayor Scott Lang** – The biggest story each New Bedford election cycle revolves around is whether or not Scott Lang is going to run again. Most people in the political know will tell you Scott Lang is really the only person that could unseat current Mayor Mitchell, even though I'm not so sure about that. Would he be a strong candidate? Sure, but he did leave City Hall with the public schools having major issues, with the high school having a graduation rate approaching 60% and an employment rate much higher than it is today – 16% in 2010 compared to 6% today.

Having said all that, Scott Lang is still a very popular figure in New Bedford politics and would make the mayor's race a real battle that we haven't seen since 2011 when **Jon Mitchell defeated State Representative Antonio Cabral by 837 votes (9,876 to 9,039)**. Lang has the name recognition that is worth more than a huge war chest of cash.





**Reverend David Lima** – Rev. Lima is the Executive Minister of the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford and in the leader of the Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition. He's a man of the people and dedicates his time to the most disadvantaged of the community.

Rev. Lima was also one of the few voices in opposition to the casino coming to New Bedford. While he wasn't the lone voice at the open community discussions, he was the most consistent and passionate. It was an unpopular stance and one reason I consider him a strong candidate for mayor – when in leadership you have to make the best choice, not the most popular one.



**Erik Andrade** – If there is one man that would shake things up in a debate, it's Erik. I first saw Erik speak in front of a packed City Council on YouTube and thought his passion is something needed in New Bedford politics. Here's the video:

Erik has spent much of his career working with the youth of New Bedford and he is someone that they will listen to should he take an official leadership role in New Bedford. **He ran for school committee in 2011 and received over 5,000 votes,** something difficult to do for a newcomer to New Bedford politics. While someone who travels a lot for political movements, he's someone who should deeply root himself in New Bedford and throw his hat back in to New Bedford politics.



Photo by Colton Simmons.

**Charlie Perry** – New Bedford Police Officer Charlie Perry has already made it known that he is running for mayor of New Bedford. A Veteran on the police force, Charlie is a very likable person that would immediately connect with people. Crime will also be a top issue in New Bedford and serving decades on the police force is a strong resume.

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Who would you like to see run for office in New Bedford? Post a comment!