

Assistant City Solicitor Eric Jaikes appointed New Bedford City Solicitor

Longtime Assistant Solicitor Will Take Over for Mikaela McDermott, Who Steps Down After Exemplary Service.

Assistant City Solicitor Eric Jaikes will take the leadership role in the City's legal office effective Sunday, Feb. 6, when City Solicitor Mikaela McDermott steps down after more than a decade of exemplary service.

Jaikes has practiced municipal law for the City as Assistant City Solicitor since May 2001, serving former mayors Fred Kalisz, Jr., and Scott Lang, in addition to Mayor Jon Mitchell.

"It has been my pleasure to provide legal advice and representation to three different administrations as an Assistant City Solicitor," Jaikes said. "I look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve New Bedford in my new role."

Jaikes' tenure has included work on the recent successful litigation against waste hauler ABC Disposal, operation of New Bedford Regional Airport, and dredging projects in the Port of New Bedford. He's been a fixture on boards and committees for the airport and several other City entities.

"Eric has played a major role on the City's legal team for a long time. His breadth of knowledge and legal skills will make him ready to go on day one," Mayor Mitchell said.

McDermott began her City service in 2010, under former Mayor Scott Lang. She then worked as an Assistant Chief of Staff under Mayor Mitchell, who named her City Solicitor in January 2014. A graduate of Harvard College and the University of

Virginia School of Law, McDermott practiced at major law firms in Washington, D.C., and New York City before coming to New Bedford to be closer to family.

The many significant matters she oversaw included the \$8.5 million settlement in 2015—the largest settlement in the City’s history—from AVX Corp. and Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, after litigation involving chemical contamination at the Parker Street Waste Site, which included Keith Middle School and New Bedford High School.

She also oversaw the ABC Disposal litigation and a variety of novel legal issues emerging from the 2019 ransomware attack and the current COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am extraordinarily grateful to Mayor Mitchell for the opportunity to have served New Bedford as City Solicitor for the past eight years, and to Mayor Lang for first hiring me,” McDermott said. “I am also deeply thankful to my colleagues in the City Solicitor’s Office and throughout the City, who work tirelessly for the people of New Bedford. I know that Eric Jaikes will make an outstanding city solicitor, and I am committed to helping him in any way I can during this transition.”

“The City has been most fortunate to have had Mikaela McDermott as its chief legal counsel,” Mayor Mitchell said. “Her capacity for exacting analysis, unwavering professionalism, work ethic and commitment to service enabled our City to solve the thorniest of legal challenges. She saved taxpayers countless expense, and elevated the administration’s ability to deliver for New Bedford residents.”