

Commission on police use of force policies announces public meeting for review and input from New Bedford residents

NBPD policies available for public review and input.

The Commission on Police Use of Force Policies has set aside August 26 between 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. to receive public input for recommendations to the NBPD use of force policies.

Members of the Commission have been meeting weekly all summer, said Public Safety Committee Chairman and Councillor Brian K. Gomes. It has focused on its mandate to review three existing policies at the NBPD that embody “use of force.”

Gomes encourages members of the public to review the policies and login to its public Zoom meeting for their voices to be heard. “This is a listening session for members of the Commission as we are eager to hear what the public perspective is of these policies.”

Review the policies below:

Use of Deadly Force

Use of Less-Lethal Force

General Order

Following is the information for connecting to the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 929 5403 3788

Passcode: 872199

Dial-in: (646) 558-8656

Mayor Jon Mitchell created the commission in June as a part of his commitment to The Mayor's Pledge aimed at addressing use of force policies in police departments across the country. The Obama Foundation's Mayor's Pledge calls on mayors across the United States to commit to the following four actions:

1. REVIEW your use of force policies.
2. ENGAGE your communities by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in your review.
3. REPORT the findings of your review to your community and seek feedback.
4. REFORM your communities police use of force policies.

The Commission now meets weekly on Wednesdays and is made up of a broad spectrum of community leaders and subject matter experts.

If you have any questions, have difficulty accessing the policies in the links above or want to submit your recommendations, please email: NBPInfoHub@newbedfordpd.com.

Man shot and killed in New Bedford on Tuesday was arrested in 2017 for threatening President Trump

41-year old Ausarmaat Rahotep was shot and killed on Dartmouth Street in New Bedford around 9:50 pm on Tuesday. 27-year old Jonovan Gonzalez was arrested and charged with murder of

Rahotep on Thursday.

Ausarmaat Rahotep was arrested in February of 2017 for **allegedly claiming to be heading toward President Donald Trump with a truck full of bombs.** Per 2017 CBS 12 news article:

“Investigators with the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office said the trucker made threats against the president during a 911 call Sunday morning. An operator at the Columbia County Combined Communications Center believed the man made the calls while parked in a large truck along the interstate.

Investigators arrested 37-year-old Ausarmaat Rahotep of Rhode Island. He is facing charges of reckless driving, fleeing and attempting to elude, and making threats against elected officials.”

Police have not released a motive for the shooting at this time.

The LGBTQ Voice on New Bedford Guide reaches 100th episode

The LGBTQ Voice, produced by Eileen Dugas and Traci Welch of the South Coast LGBTQ+ Network and aired on New Bedford Guide’s Facebook page weekly, reached a major milestone last week – 100 episodes!

“With this platform, we’ve been able to discuss important matters, share resources, events, and what’s happening in and around the South Coast LGBTQ+ community,” said Traci Welch. “Thank you New Bedford Guide.”

The first episode aired on January 2nd, 2018, and the most recent episode featuring comedian Karen Williams was the 100th.

“It was important more me to give the LGBTQ community a voice on New Bedford Guide,” said Michaela Silvia, the owner of New Bedford Guide.” I thought of the idea in 2017, pitched it to Traci and Eileen and through their hard work, we’ve reached the 100th episode milestone. Traci and Eileen make it happen week after week, I simply provide the outlet.”

You can watch the first episode here:

You can watch all 100 episodes **here**.

The South Coast LGBTQ+ Network (The Network) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2014 by seven LGBTQ agencies and allied organizations with help from The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts. More information can be found on their **website** and **Facebook page**.

St. Luke’s Hospital hasn’t had a COVID-19 patient since August 11

As of Saturday, August 15, St. Luke’s Hospital in New Bedford has not had a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient since August 11. On August 11, the Massachusetts Department of Health reported three “Hospitalized Total COVID patients – suspected and confirmed” at St. Luke’s with none of them in the ICU.

Three has been the highest suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient count at St. Luke's Hospital for the month of August. The hospital has reported between zero and three suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases for the entire month of August but hasn't reported a case in five days.

According to the **Massachusetts Department of Public Health's COVID-19 dashboard**, the vast majority of hospital admissions for COVID-19 are suspected. For example, 148 people were admitted to the hospital for COVID-19, but out of those 126 were suspected and only 22 were confirmed.

22,969 people were tested resulting in 366 new positive COVID-19 results in Massachusetts on August 15. Additionally, 14 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported. To date, 114,095 people have tested positive with 8,596 COVID-19 related deaths reported in Massachusetts. The current positive test rate in the state remains at a 1.4% low.

Massachusetts State Police participates in multi-state relay to bring tricycle to 6-year-old boy with special needs

On Wednesday, Hampden County Deputy Bob "The Bike Man" Charland, who runs Pedal Thru Youth, received a Facebook message with an article of a 6-year-old boy in need of a tricycle for special needs.

Deputy Charland knew he had two such trikes, so he looked at the article and realized that it was not a local child in Massachusetts but a boy in Elyria, Ohio. So he reached out to the Massachusetts State Police Springfield barracks commander Lieutenant Jon Provost for help. Lt. Provost then contacted the State Police Office of Media Relations to see if they could help with arranging a relay to Ohio. A message was sent to New York and Pennsylvania State Police and Ohio State Highway Patrol asking for assistance in delivering the tricycle to the boy. All three departments immediately agreed to help and Thursday arrangements were made to use Route 90 for a relay of the trike in the back of cruisers from Springfield, Massachusetts, to Elyria, Ohio.

At 6:30 a.m. on Friday the trike was loaded into Trooper Moran's cruiser in Springfield. Trooper Moran and recent 85th RTT graduate Trooper Torres headed west, meeting Trooper Chandler of the New York State Police at the Massachusetts-New York line, where the trike was transferred to Trooper Chandler's Cruiser. Trooper Chandler then drove west, meeting Trooper Johns in Syracuse, New York, and the trike was transferred to Trooper John's cruiser. Trooper Johns drove his portion of the route and then handed the trike off to Sergeant Rhoney in Victor, New York, who brought it to the Pennsylvanian-New York state line.

There he meet Trooper Arrington of the Pennsylvania State Police who took custody of the trike and brought it across the top of Pennsylvania to the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. There he met Lieutenant Jackson, the station commander for the Ashtabula, Ohio State Highway Patrol Post. The final handoff was made to Lieutenant Dunbar and Trooper Castillo, Elyria Post, who drove it to Elyria. The bike traveled almost 600 miles in 12 hours through 4 States.

The bike was delivered to Silas Oliver along with a helmet from the Ohio State Police. Thanks to the efforts of all those involved from Deputy Charland who built the bike and started

the ball rolling to all the Troopers, Sergeants and Lieutenants who assisted in the relay and those who helped organize this joint venture to bring some happiness to a little boy. Also thanks to Fox 8 news who published the story which set off the chain of events.

The effort was assisted by First Sergeant Kevin Flynn of the New York State Police and Sergeant Ray Santiago of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Both helped coordinate the efforts in their respective States with Sergeant Santiago helping in the final delivery.

All photos by Massachusetts State Police:



Massachusetts State Police investigating pedestrian fatal

At approximately 11:22 a.m. yesterday Troopers assigned to State Police-South Boston Barracks responded to Quincy Shore

Drive in Quincy for a crash that resulted in the death of a male pedestrian.

Preliminary investigation indicates a 2018 Mercedes-Benz GLC was traveling on Quincy Shore Drive in the left travel lane traveling north. Simultaneously, a pedestrian was crossing Quincy Shore Drive in the crosswalk. The pedestrian was struck by the Mercedes-Benz in the left lane.

The investigation is ongoing, included in that investigation will be the signals at the crosswalk. Speed was not a factor in the crash.

DCR lifeguards and bystander nurses administered emergency medical aid at the scene in an attempt to save the victim's life. The victim, a 68-year-old Canton man, was transported by ambulance to Boston Medical Center, where he later was pronounced deceased. His name is not being released at this time.

The operator of the Mercedes-Benz, a 75-year-old man from Newton, remained at the scene.

No charges have been filed as of this time; the investigation into the facts and circumstances of the crash remains ongoing and is being conducted by Troop H of the Massachusetts State Police with assistance from the State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section, the State Police Crime Scene Services Section, and the State Police H Troop Detectives.

Massachusetts state public health officials announce season's second human case of EEE; Risk levels raised in eight communities

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing confirmed the second human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a female in her 60s who was exposed to EEE in Hampden County. As a result, the EEE risk level in Wilbraham has been raised to critical, and the EEE risk level in Hampden and Monson has been raised to high. All three municipalities are in Hampden County. Additionally, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Ludlow, Palmer, and Springfield in Hampden County have been raised to moderate risk.

Across the Commonwealth, three municipalities are at critical risk critical, eight are at high risk, and 20 are at moderate risk for EEE.

DPH is working with the local health departments and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to coordinate mosquito surveillance and appropriate public health response activities.

All residents are reminded to use mosquito repellent any time they are outside, and those in high and critical risk communities are advised to schedule their outdoor activity to avoid the dusk to dawn hours to reduce exposure to the mosquitoes most likely to spread EEE.

EEE is a rare but potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. There has already been one other human

case identified this year. In 2019, there were 12 human cases of EEE in Massachusetts with 6 deaths.

EEE virus has been found in 65 mosquito samples this year, over 70 percent of them in species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. Information about current mosquito activity will continue to be updated regularly and can be found [here](#).

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Bill would allow eviction records to be sealed in Massachusetts

Chris Lisinski

State House News Service

Tenants who faced evictions in the past could petition to have those court records sealed under a bill advancing through the Massachusetts Legislature.

The Judiciary Committee unanimously voted last week to advance its version of legislation (H 4934) aimed at limiting the obstacles that residents face acquiring rental housing based on past history. Supporters of the proposal include the Boston City Council, which last year called for passage of a different version. The council argued that because eviction records are permanently public that makes it more difficult for those who have faced housing removal in the past to find stable homes.

Under the committee version of the bill, anyone with a court record of a fault eviction or lessor action can file a petition to have the record sealed if no additional action has been brought against them for three years. No-fault evictions could be sealed under a similar process without a mandatory time frame outlined in the bill. Parties in the original case would not need to be notified of the petition to seal the records for fault or no-fault evictions.

The legislation also bans consumer reporting agencies from disclosing the existence of or using eviction records unless they had been available for public inspection in a court within 30 days of a report. It also forbids filing of actions against minor defendants.

Judiciary Committee Co-chair Rep. Claire Cronin's office told the News Service that the committee reported the bill favorably "with no dissenting votes." The measure was sent to the House Ways and Means Committee. Housing protections have emerged as an important focus during the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis, though the underlying bills on which the committee version was based had been filed at the start of the legislative session in January 2019.

**Honoring John Lewis with
"good trouble, necessary
trouble"; On the interruption
of New Bedford Mayor**

Mitchell's speech

By Erik Andrade.

Last week community leaders from BREATHE! and From The Community, For The Community New Bedford Black Lives Matter movement decided to honor Congressman John Lewis' legacy by "answering the highest calling of our heart and standing up for what we truly believe in" JUSTICE!

We were shocked to discover that the New Bedford Human Rights Commission had scheduled Jon Mitchell to speak at a local vigil for Congressman John Lewis. We felt that this was completely inappropriate because Mitchell has actively participated in the cover-up of the New Bedford Police murder of a 15-year old child, Malcolm Gracia.

For over eight years Jon Mitchell has advanced the false claim that Tyson Barnes had life-threatening injuries and was stabbed multiple times by Malcolm Gracia, despite clear evidence he was not. As such, we consider it completely reprehensible for Mitchell to invoke Black Lives Matter supporter Congressman John Lewis's memory while denying the call for justice from the local Black Lives Matter movement.

Fittingly, it is Congressman John Lewis' words that inspired us to turn words into actions and make the decision to "get into good trouble, necessary trouble". We decided that it was irresponsible for Jon Mitchell to be allowed to speak at a vigil for Congressman John Lewis while actively denying justice for Malcolm Gracia. As Jon Mitchell got to the podium we positioned ourselves peacefully on the stairs of city hall with posters and began calling out for justice for Malcolm Gracia.

We informed the event's emcee, Rev. David Lima that we would let the program continue for all other speakers however we would not be silent when and if Jon Mitchell attempted to

speak. When Rev. Lima asked us to compromise this position, we said certainly we would agree to move off the stairs if Jon Mitchell agreed to simply say "Justice for Malcolm Gracia!"

Jon Mitchell chose not to; so we chose to continue exercising our freedom of speech until Mitchell decided to forfeit. When Rev. Lima informed us that Mitchell would no longer be speaking we obliged and moved a few steps lower.

To our shock, some members of the New Bedford Human Rights Commission and the clergy community decided to find their voice and express outrage at our decision to honor Congressman John Lewis by living the afterlife of his words. Astonishingly, these same voices of critique have been so silent and seemingly at peace with the cover up and murder of Malcolm Gracia.

What if Malcolm's last name matched their own? I imagine any outrage and frustration would be directed a different direction and many would be standing in solidarity with the call for justice for Malcolm Gracia.

Some stated our actions were not peaceful because they disrupted Jon Mitchell's speech. To those of this opinion I would ask them to reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s quote "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." So where there is no justice there is no peace. We are actively calling for justice and in that we are calling for peace.

We really read Congressman John Lewis's editorial and accepted our ability to respond to local injustices with actions and not just theory. Tonight we honored Congressman John Lewis by heeding his reminder that we have a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out against injustices.

Ironically, Jon Mitchell had the nerve to claim in the paper that it was "unfortunate that we expressed our opinion in an irresponsible way". Jon Mitchell what is unfortunate is the

fact that for over eight years you have failed to accept the responsibility to ensure the right to life, the right to liberty, the right to the pursuit of happiness, and the civil rights of all of New Bedford's citizens including Malcolm Gracia.

Rest In Power Congressman John Lewis and Justice for Malcolm Gracia!

Have an essay you'd like to share with the New Bedford Guide community? Email info@newbedfordguide.com

Southern Airways Express now offers flights between New Bedford and Nantucket

Daily flights between Nantucket and New Bedford to begin August 26th, 2020.

Southern Airways Express, the fastest growing commuter airline in America, announces expanded regional service that includes a new daily flight between New Bedford and Nantucket. The route will complement Southern's expansion earlier this summer, which added Hyannis. The flights will begin on August 26th, 2020, and tickets are now on sale.

Southern's seasonal flying in New England is scheduled through October 12, though newer route additions of Hyannis and New Bedford are being considered for year-round service.

Southern Airways will operate the flights from New Bedford "non-sterile," meaning they will arrive and depart from a commuter ramp, eliminating the requirement for TSA screening

hassles at both Hyannis and Nantucket.

“Southern Airways has shown considerable commitment to New England over the last few months,” said Mark Cestari, Newton resident and Chief Commercial Officer at Southern Airways. “New Bedford is the number one request we’ve had for new service.”

Southern’s flights will be operated on roomy and quiet Cessna Grand Caravans. One-way fares begin at \$59.

“Providing accurate, complete, and compelling data about our market was a large factor in this partnership with Southern,” said New Bedford Airport Assistant Manager, Michale Crane, “We are confident that this new service option will help meet the commercial air service needs of our region.”

Southern, with operational footprints in the Gulf South, the mid-Atlantic, Hawaii, California, and New England is one of the largest commuter airlines in the country.