

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell discusses road repairs

One of the biggest complains we hear from New Bedford residents is the condition of the city's roads. Here's Mayor Mitchell addressing the concern during our interview last week.

Interview with New Bedford Mayoral candidate Charlie Perry

Live interview with New Bedford Mayoral candidate Charlie Perry

New Bedford Mayor Mitchell and Chief Cordeiro walk County Street

Live with the New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell and Chief of Police Joseph Cordeiro walking to County Street and Rivet Street area.

Congressman Keating's statement on President Trump's decision to end DACA program

Below is a statement from Congressman Bill Keating, a senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee, on President Trump's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

"Democracy, justice, and our shared values demand that Congress must take swift action and bring a vote to the floor to preserve DACA. The nearly 790,000 'Dreamers' came to this country as children by no choice of their own. They are our neighbors, our co-workers, our classmates, and members of our Armed Forces who have put their lives on the line to defend our nation. President Trump's shameful decision and Attorney General Sessions's statement fail to take into account that Dreamers are by definition taxpaying, law-abiding, contributing Americans, the majority of which know no other home. Democrats and Republicans alike have opposed this repeal. Congress can, and must, take action to make DACA law."

A preview of the 2017 New

Bedford municipal elections

Thirty five New Bedford residents are running for elected officer in 2017, up from 30 candidates that ran in 2015. Three incumbents are running unopposed and only the mayoral race and Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 4 city council contents will see a primary election on October 3rd. The final election will be held on November 7th.

Mayor

Jon Mitchell (I)

Charlie Perry

Mitchell Garner

At-Large City Council

Brian K. Gomes (I)

Linda Morad (I)

Deborah Coelho (I)

Naomi R.A. Carney (I)

Ian Abreu (I)

Christopher Boerl

Michael Jansen

Ward 1 City Council

Christopher Amaral

Melissa Costa

William Markey

Randy Santos

Mark Ventura

Daniel Costa

Steven Caton

Ward 2 City Council

Carlos Pimentel Felix

Edwin Cartagena

Maria Giesta

Ward 3 City Council

Hugh Dunn (I)*

Ward 4 City Council

Dana Rebeiro (I)

Joseph Jo-Jo Fortes

Kenneth Gilbert

Ward 5 City Council

David Sullivan

Kate Towers

Nelson Macedo

Paul Chasse

Scott Lima.

Ward 6 City Council

Joe Lopes (I)*

New Bedford School Committee

Josh Amaral (I)

John Oliveira

Colleen Dawicki

Richard Porter III

Assessor

Martin "Marty" Treadup (I)*

* running unopposed

(I) = incumbent

Want to discuss all things New Bedford politics? Join our
Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newbedfordpolitics/>

Massachusetts legislators consider legislation on gender neutral driver's licenses

Democrat Massachusetts Senator Karen Spilka is presenting legislation to allow Massachusetts residents to identify as "X" instead of male or female on their driver's licenses. Earlier this month, **Oregon became the first state to start issuing gender-neutral driver's licenses** and state ID cards.

Senator Karen Spilka's proposed legislation Massachusetts reads:

"Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an applicant shall be permitted to designate "X" in lieu of "male" or "female" on a driver's license issued pursuant to section 8 of chapter 90, a learner's permit issued pursuant to section 8B of chapter 90, an identification card issued pursuant to section 8E of chapter 90 or a liquor purchase identification card issued pursuant to section 34B of chapter 138. No documentation shall be required for such designations. The registrar of motor vehicles may promulgate regulations to implement this act."

On August 24, 2017, the bill has been referred to the committee on **Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently**, which Senator Spilka is the Senate Vice Chair.

Senator Karen Spilka represents the 2nd Middlesex and Norfolk district that includes the towns of Ashland, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medway and Natick.

Four file officially for three New Bedford school committee seats

Four people get to skip the New Bedford school committee preliminary election in October and to face off for three school committee seats on November 7th. At least seven candidates were needed to have a preliminary election.

Incumbent Josh Amaral and new faces John Oliveira, Colleen Dawicki and Richard Porter III are looking to fill the three school committee seats. Margaret Amaral turned in enough signatures, but withdrew her name.

Want to discuss all things New Bedford politics? Join our Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newbedfordpolitics/>

New Bedford Senator Montigny leads legislator pay raises with 79%, \$65,315 hike

Earlier this year, Massachusetts legislators voted to increase their pay and judges pay by \$18 million. It was vetoed by Governor Baker but quickly overturned by the legislators. The pay raise was mostly on party lines – no Republicans supported

the pay raise bill and nine House Democrats and three Senate Democrats opposed the measure.

Before the pay raise, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg was the only state senator of 40 to make more than \$100,000 a year. In 2016, he earned \$102,233 – \$60,033 base pay, \$35,000 leadership pay and \$7,200 for office expenses. He's now earning \$162,548 and now at least 28 of the 40 now make over \$100,000 per year.

Excluding Joseph Boncore who was only in the senate part time last year, the biggest winner pay raise percentage wise was New Bedford Senator Mark Montigny with a whopping 79% increase. Montigny went from a total income of \$82,233 to \$147,548. The biggest increases came from his leadership pay increase (\$15,000 to \$65,000) and office expenses increase (\$7,200 to \$20,000). Even if you eliminate office expenses his pay went from \$75,033 to \$127,548.

The biggest winner salary wise was Senate President Stanley Rosenberg who went from earning \$102,233 to \$162,548 or a 59% pay raise.

The State Senate legislators were the clear winners, but the Massachusetts House also saw sizable pay raises. In 2016, only one of the 160 State representatives, House Speaker Robert DeLeo, made over \$100,000 in total income. Now 30 of the 160 State representatives do.

Combine both the Senate and House, and we've gone from 2 of the 200 Massachusetts legislators, 1%, making over \$100,000 a year in total income to 58 of the 200, or 34% making \$100,000.

Locally, New Bedford Representative Tony Cabral saw his total pay go up by 37% from \$82,232 to \$112,547. That's an annual increase of \$30,315. New Bedford/Acushnet Representative Robert Koczera saw his total pay go from \$62,232 to \$87,747 or 31%. New Bedford/Dartmouth Representative Christopher Markey saw his pay go from \$74,732 to \$97,547 or 31%.

Local legislators voted for the raise and have gone on record to say they deserve the increase.. Some even say that \$62,500 a year isn't enough to live on. That may be true if you live on Boston, but in **New Bedford the income per capita is \$21,181**, do New Bedford legislators really need five to six time the income of their constituents?

Almost all of the pay increases come in the form of stipends – extra income for filling leadership positions and increases in office expenses. In reality, this is a way to circumvent the Massachusetts constitutional amendment that restricts the base income of legislators to the state's median household income.

In 1998, **60% of Massachusetts voters that went to the polls** voted to “prohibit state legislators from changing their base pay and instead would adjust that pay according to changes in median household income.” Voters changed the constitution to restrict base pay, but not total compensation. In response, legislators gave themselves significant stipend raises.

What is interesting is all 40 Senators received leadership pay from \$15,000 to \$80,000, up from \$7,500 to \$35,000. Apparently, in the Massachusetts Senate everyone is a leader and this is clearly where most of the new pay is coming from.

Pay data on Massachusetts legislators wasn't easy to come by, **MassFiscal.org had to do a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the paycheck records for lawmakers.** So much for transparency in the Massachusetts government.

These raises in legislator income comes after the lawmakers have **denied Massachusetts residents a tax holiday for two years now.** Sadly, our legislators are looking after their savings account, not yours.

You can see all the Massachusetts State Senators pay raises [here](#).

Senate_Pay_Raise_Totals

You can see all the Massachusetts House of Representatives pay raises here.

House_Pay_Raise_Totals

At the time of this writing, Senator Montingy's office hasn't responded to e-mail requests for a quote.

Five candidates run for open Ward 5 New Bedford City Council seat

Five New Bedford residents have committed to running for the Ward 5 New Bedford City Council seat vacated by Kerry Winterson. In February, Winterson cited his wife's health and personal reasons for not seeking re-election.

The five candidates are David Sullivan, Kate Towers, Nelson Macedo, Paul Chasse and Scott Lima.

Ward 5 contains Buttonwood Park and St. Luke's hospital. See map below.

The preliminary election will be held on October 3rd and the top two vote getters move on to the November 7th final election.

Want to discuss all things New Bedford politics? Join our Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newbedfordpolitics/>

New Bedford Ward 5 Map

Ward-5 New Bedford Map

Two challenge Dana Rebeiro for New Bedford Ward 4 City Council seat

Incumbent New Bedford Ward 4 City Councilor Dana Rebeiro will face two challengers in this year's race. Former Ward 4 councilor Joseph Jo-Jo Fortes and Kenneth Gilbert are challenging Rebeiro who will be seeking her third term in office.

Ward 4 contains much of downtown, the waterfront and the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge area. See map below.

The preliminary election will be held on October 3rd and the top two vote getters move on to the November 7th final election.

Want to discuss all things New Bedford politics? Join our Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newbedfordpolitics/>

New Bedford Ward 4 Map

Ward-4 new bedford map