

New Bedford Police Union leadership responds to Mayor Mitchell's defense of police chief

The following statement was posted by the New Bedford Police Union on their Facebook page in response to **statements by Mayor Mitchell and New Bedford Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro**:

MAYOR MITCHELL'S POLITICAL POSTURING EMBARRASSES POLICE CHIEF,
DEPARTMENT AND CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

The following statement was released by New Bedford Police Union following the recent politicking by the mayor in advance of Tuesday's primary.

#newbedfordpoliceunion #newbedford

READ THE UNION'S STATEMENT HERE:

In response to Mayor Jon Mitchell's press release regarding a recent vote by the members of the New Bedford Police Union concerning their feelings about Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro. The Mayor refers to the union leadership convening a meeting to take a vote in opposition to Chief Cordeiro's leadership. This statement is true however the public should be aware that this vote was asked for by the union body and was then supported by the leadership. In their statement the Mayor and Chief Cordeiro keep referring to the current ongoing contract negotiations between the city and the New Bedford Police Union as reason why we have taken this vote and had recently conducted a survey in regards to Chief Cordeiro's ability to lead our department. These statements by both the Chief and the Mayor are false and untrue. The New Bedford Police Union understands and trust the process that we have to take during our current contract negotiations. If our frustration was

strictly due to the contract negotiations our issues would be with the Mayor and his administration as we are constantly reminded by Chief Cordeiro that he does not have control over our contract. The issues that have been brought to the Mayor in regards to Chief Cordeiro's ability to lead have not only been about the Union membership but also the civilians who are employed by the city.

The leadership of the New Bedford Police Union had not informed the Mayor of the results. We had intended on discussing the matter on a more confidential and private basis with the Mayor, the City Council's Safety Committee & Chief Joseph Cordeiro. The Mayor apparently obtained the information and decided to make it public and in doing so embarrassed the Police Chief. It was not done by any of the members of The New Bedford Police Union and, certainly, not by its elected leadership. As a result, the Mayor has publicly undermined his own Police Chief. Moreover, the Mayor's inexcusable publication of the membership's vote has served to encourage gossip, innuendo and a media frenzy looking for answers.

Mayor Mitchell has now made it impossible for the Chief of Police to lead our department. Apparently, the Mayor thought he was smart when he made the decision to use his taxpayer-funded media operation to publicize internal union discussions that now only undermines his own police department and harms public safety. Mayor Mitchell is trying to spin our credible concerns and complaints about Chief Cordeiro into a contract issue, this is far from the case.

As a former Federal Prosecutor, Mayor Mitchell should have known better. He should have examined all of the "facts", talk to all involved before "going public". Instead, his impetuous behavior brought shame, ridicule and unnecessary media attention to Chief Cordeiro. The men and women of the New Bedford Police Union had no intention of releasing the results of our vote to the public unless discussions with the City's administration resulted in additional frustration. As law

enforcement professionals we understand our mission and until now we thought Jon Mitchell did too. All he has done, because it's an election year, is use private information to weaken the New Bedford Police Department and create doubt in the minds of the citizens of this City as to whether their police department can continue to keep them safe.

Rest assured that the members of the New Bedford Police Union will stay the course and ensure that the citizens of New Bedford remain protected in our community while we continue to address serious issues within the Department. As always, regardless of what Jon Mitchell says and does the residents of New Bedford will have the men and women of their police department serving and protecting them.

Respectfully,

Hank Turgeon

President, New Bedford Police Union