

# New Bedford Police Union President Reports Findings of Morale Survey

The following is a letter that was sent to New Bedford Police Union members from the New Bedford Police Union President Hank Turgeon:

Brothers & Sisters,

Recently the City hired a private company, to conduct an "independent study" of our department and in that extensive study lasting over a year they said that there were many failings in this department from lack of training, a broken fleet of vehicles and deteriorating buildings.

The study talked about the Chief's lack of loyalty from top ranking Officers, not that they could put their finger on specific incidents where any ranking member refused to follow orders or do their jobs only that they were protected by our Union. The study briefly discussed a "systemic" low morale issue lasting 20 years.

This Union agreed with several of the failings and our Executive Board has raised all of the failings to our current administration in the past. What this Union strongly disagreed with was the idea, the insinuation, that our Captains should not be protected by our Union and the provoking language that they were somehow undermining this Chief or not performing their duties. Our Captains have showed their devotion to their personal growth and this department through their career paths and desire to achieve as much educational knowledge as they could. They prove themselves to this Chief in weekly staff meetings whereas under past Chiefs these meetings might have been held once a month if not less. Our Captains all expressed through emails and verbal conversations that they demand to be

in and protected by the Union that they have belonged to since the beginning of their careers, just like this Chief had.

The other issue that we strongly disagreed with was the "systemic" morale issue. We as the work force of this department, with the civilian staff, not only expressed our concern of low morale under this current Chief to the company that conducted the "independent study", but we've told the Mayor directly.

So at last month's Union meeting the Executive Board discussed options with members in attendance and a survey of the body was agreed to and voted on. Several questions and variations of those questions were discussed and four specific questions were put into a survey and distributed to every member of the New Bedford Police Union over the past two weeks.

At today's Executive Board Meeting we tallied the results of the recent survey that the Union conducted. The following are the questions and tallied results. Keep in mind some members answered all four questions, some only answered some of the questions and only six members chose not to participate.

1. Are you happy with the direction that the Chief and Deputy are taking this department? Yes (15) or No (206)

2. Are you happy with the working conditions of this department?

Yes (13) or No (216)

3. Do you feel that this department's morale is lower under this administration than it has been under past administrations?

Yes (201) or No (21)

4. If you had an opportunity to leave this police department and be employed by another police department would you go?

Yes (178) or No (48)

It's unfortunate that the New Bedford Police Union was forced to conduct such a survey as this, but this is the only way to get the truth to this Chief, the Mayor and most importantly the citizens of our great City. This "independent study" disregarded our position in an effort to paint the Chief in a positive light, which is typical of the Mayor's stance with public information released to the media. The hard work of the men and women of the New Bedford Police Union are not being reported because of the job we do. Our main priority is to keep our City safe, that involves responding to and investigating crimes. This Mayor wants to hide those crimes from the public's eye and only paint the City as a picturesque place to visit with no crime at all. We can appreciate his efforts for tourism purposes, but when you hide the crime you lure our citizens and tourist into a false sense of security and they let their guard down, they leave doors unlocked, they don't pay attention to their surroundings, they make themselves potential victims which in turn makes our job all that much harder and the criminals illegal activity all that much easier. We, the New Bedford Police Union, will continue to protect the City of New Bedford from those that prey on the weak and innocent. We will continue to be strong supporters and organizers of community events and going forward we will inform the public on a regular basis of our hard work and any failings of this administration.

Respectfully,  
Hank Turgeon  
President  
New Bedford Police Union