

# OPINION: If you're Brian Gomes it makes perfect sense to run for mayor and city council

It's official – long-time New Bedford at-Large City Councilor Brian Gomes has officially filed to run for at-Large city council and mayor in the same October 1 preliminary election (though he can still withdraw by 5 pm on Sep 3). He filed last Friday, the last possible day to officially file. It's a bold, calculated move by Gomes, that will at a minimum result in interesting debates. **There are now six people running for New Bedford mayor.**

Running for both spots is legal and makes sense if you are Brian Gomes. Most people in New Bedford could not pull it off without paying a price politically, but Gomes finished with the most votes in the New Bedford at-Large race in 2017. You only need to finish in the top 5 in the at-Large race to get elected to office and I'm certain Gomes feels confident in achieving that.

| COUNCILLOR-AT-LARGE           |       |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| (VOTE FOR) 5                  |       |       |
| IAN ABREU . . . . .           | 7,468 | 18.02 |
| NAOMI R. A. CARNEY . . . . .  | 5,959 | 14.38 |
| DEBORA COELHO . . . . .       | 5,893 | 14.22 |
| BRIAN K. GOMES. . . . .       | 7,510 | 18.12 |
| LINDA M. MORAD. . . . .       | 7,020 | 16.94 |
| CHRISTOPHER W. BOERL. . . . . | 4,217 | 10.17 |
| MICHAEL JANSON. . . . .       | 3,260 | 7.87  |
| WRITE-IN. . . . .             | 119   | .29   |

There is little doubt to me, that someone like Gomes, Ian Abreu or Linda Morad, could run for at-Large and mayor at the same time and still get elected to the city council. Mayor is a different animal.

Most who follow politics in New Bedford would say that Gomes has little chance of beating incumbent mayor Jon Mitchell, but I don't think his chances fall into the long-shot category. Sure, Gomes has very little campaign money (\$19.96) and Mitchell has well over \$200,000 in his war chest, but money isn't everything (though it REALLY helps!). Mitchell hasn't been in a real election since 2011 where he faced then Ward 1 councilor Linda Morad (now City Council President for 2 straight years) and State Legislature Tony Cabral. Since then he ran unopposed and went on to defeat Maria Giesta and Charlie Perry fairly easily. Gomes would make things more difficult for Mitchell.

Some will get angry at Gomes for running for two spots in this year's ballot because **a special election would cost \$50,000-60,000**, but I can't blame him. It's a low risk, high reward strategy. After losing his job at St. Luke's hospital (he's currently in a lawsuit against the hospital), he's now working as a security guard and still holds his City Council position. This year's mayoral race is for a 4-year term at \$113,285 a year.

Factor in annual pay increases and you are talking about a 4-year term worth nearly a half a million dollars, quit the increase in pay for Gomes. I can't blame him for attempting a political move that would increase his income 2-3 fold without really risking his at-Large seat. City Councilors make \$23,498 a year and security guards are generally paid by the hour. Wouldn't you want to swap out two jobs for one while earning three-times the income?

Gomes's biggest issue will be if he somehow wins both the mayor race and gets an at-Large city council spot. He'd have

to pick one and that means the at-Large seat would be open in a special election. **Manny DeBrito of the New Bedford Elections Office has stated that a special election would cost the city \$50,000-60,000** – not the best way to start off your 4-year mayoral term.