

Paul Coderre Jr. appointed Acting New Bedford Fire Chief

Effective Sunday, December 16, Deputy Fire Chief Paul N. Coderre Jr. will become Acting Fire Chief for the City of New Bedford. Fire Chief Michael Gomes has been absent on medical leave, and is not expected to return to duty.

Chief Gomes recently informed the City of his intent to retire. His application for retirement has been submitted to the New Bedford Contributory Retirement System and will be considered by the Board in early 2019. Chief Gomes has served as Chief since 2011, and has served in the Fire Department since 1990.

Deputy Chief Coderre has capably overseen the operations of the Fire Department during Chief Gomes' absence and is a veteran of the New Bedford Fire Department, with 25 years of service. He has served as Deputy Fire Chief since 2011.

An Acting Deputy Chief will be appointed to assume the Deputy Chief position vacated by Coderre. A selection process for an Acting Deputy Chief is planned for January.

Permanent appointments to the positions of Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief are subject to Massachusetts Civil Service procedures that require eligible candidates to take promotional exams, and the Mayor to select from among the top-scoring applicants.

"Paul Coderre is an integral member of public safety leadership in New Bedford whom I have come to know well. Over the past several months, he has stepped up and provided strong leadership to the Fire Department during Chief Gomes' absence," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "Paul is well regarded by the men and women of the New Bedford Fire Department, and respected in our community. I have confidence that he will

serve the City well as Acting Chief.”

Mayor Mitchell also thanked outgoing Chief Michael Gomes for his service. “Chief Gomes has been a committed public servant who has been dedicated to the public safety of the residents of New Bedford throughout his career. I wish him well in his retirement, and we thank him for his longtime service to the City.”

Gomes’ accomplishments as Chief include the successful lobbying of federal SAFER funding and the transition when the federal support expired. The Chief was also instrumental in upgrading the equipment and facilities of the Department, including the replacement of antiquated fire apparatuses, the acquisition of two modern fire boats, and the planning for construction of a new public safety center in the South End – the first new facility in the City since the 1950s. Under his leadership, the City also achieved ISO-1 status from the Insurance Services Office, making New Bedford one of just three fire departments in Massachusetts and one of 132 nationally to hold that distinction.