

Former New Bedford School Committee member killed in Philadelphia

“Shortly before 1 a.m. on Saturday, April 16, 41-year old former New Bedford school committee member Eric Pope was thrown out of Philadelphia ‘Tabu Bar and Lounge’ for allegedly being intoxicated.

Once outside Pope walked towards the club where the bouncer intercepted and allegedly assaulted him. Video of the incident shows Pope with his hands at his side when he was reportedly struck once, collapsed to the ground unconscious, and smacked his head on the asphalt. Video also shows that bouncers eventually dragged Pope to the sidewalk but later left him unattended as bystanders gathered.

Paramedics were called and upon arrival, attempted CPR on an unresponsive Pope. He was immediately transported to Jefferson Hospital in critical condition and days later he passed away from injuries that he sustained during the alleged assault.

Jeffrey Sotland, one of the owners of Tabu said the bouncer who punched Pope was not an employee but worked for an outside security company, Mainline Private Security. Court filings show that Mainline has been sued a dozen times since 2020, frequently over bouncers’ alleged use of force or failure to summon medics in response to injuries.

Mr. Pope served the New Bedford school committee after being elected in 2001. Pope had been living in Washington, D.C. and was visiting friends in Philadelphia when the incident happened.

About the passing, Mayor Jon Mitchell said, “We are grateful for his public service and commitment to the city. I offer my

condolences to his family at this difficult time, and hope that justice will be done in his name."