P R E S S   R E L E A S E

Mayor Mitchell appoints members of Commission on Police Use of Force Policies

New Bedford, Massachusetts– Mayor Jon Mitchell has appointed members of the Commission on Police Use of Force Policies that was announced last week after his signing of the Obama Foundation’s “Mayor’s Pledge,” which included the formation of the commission to review the police department’s policies on the use of force.

The following individuals were named to the Commission:

- City Councillor Brian K. Gomes (Chair), Chair of the, City Council Committee on Public Safety
- John G. “Buddy” Andrade, Director of the Old Bedford Village Development Corp.
- Marcus Brito-Barros, an organizer of the Black Lives Matter protests in New Bedford
- Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director of the Immigrants Assistance Center
- Chuck DiChiara, Massachusetts Police Training Institute
- Hon. Armand Fernandes, retired Associate Justice, Massachusetts Trial Court
- Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Rev. Ramiro Monteiro, International Church of the Nazarene, New Bedford
- Deputy Chief Paul Oliveira, New Bedford Police Department
- Marcelina Pina-Christian, Chair of the New Bedford Human Relations Commission
- Rita Ribeiro, retired New Bedford Police Department sergeant and School Committee member for Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
- Maria Rosario, Executive Director of Northstar Learning Center
- Bruce Rose, former President, New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Robert Schilling, criminal defense attorney
- Andrea Sheppard Lomba, Director of United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Peter Silva, designee of the New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Sowa, Bristol County District Attorney’s Office
- Hank Turgeon, President of the New Bedford Police Union
- Noah Williams, New Bedford High School Class of 2017 alumnus and current student at Georgetown University

Last week, Mayor Mitchell announced he had signed on to the Mayor’s Pledge, which is aimed at addressing use of force policies in police departments across the country and calls on mayors across the United States to commit to the following four actions:

1. REVIEW your use of force policies.
2. ENGAGE your communities by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in your review.
3. REPORT the findings of your review to your community and seek feedback.
4. REFORM your communities police use of force policies.

The Commission will seek input from city residents, review current policies of the police department, and provide a set of recommendations to Mayor Mitchell and Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro on appropriate reforms to police department policies and practices. The Commission will report out its recommendations by August.

“‘I’m grateful to the members of the commission for agreeing to review the police department’s use of force policies and provide recommendations on modernizing these policies,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “In announcing the establishment of this commission, I noted that New Bedford has a history of tolerance and understanding, but we must continue to strive for improvement for the benefit of all our residents.”

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