



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

## Committee on Ways and Means

Brian Worrell, *Chair*

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### REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

June 5, 2024

Dear Councilors:

The Committee on Ways and Means was referred the following dockets for consideration:

***Docket #0679, Message and order authorizing the appropriation of One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,300,000.00) from the income of the George Francis Parkman Fund. The funds are to be expended under the direction of the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the maintenance and improvement of Boston Common and Parks in existence since January 12, 1887.***

***Docket #0680, Message and order approving an appropriation of Four Million Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$4,400,000.00) from the 21st Century Fund, also known as the Public Educational, or Governmental (PEG) Access and Cable Related Fund, pursuant to Section 53F 3/4 of Chapter 44 of the General Laws, to the PEG Access and Cable Related Grant for cable related purposes consistent with the franchise agreement between the cable operator and the city including but not limited to: (i) supporting public, educational or governmental access cable television services; (ii) monitoring compliance of cable operator with the franchise agreement; or (iii) preparation of renewal of the franchise license.***

***Docket #0683, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Law Department revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to purchase goods and services for repairs to city property. This revolving fund shall be funded by receipts from recoveries for damages to city property caused by third parties. The Law Department will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00).***

***Docket #0684, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Mayor's Office of Tourism revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to purchase goods and services to support events and programming on and around City Hall Plaza to advance tourism and promote participation in public celebrations, civic and cultural events. This revolving fund shall be funded by receipts from payments for the use of City Hall Plaza pursuant to City of Boston Code, Ordinance, 11-7.14. The Mayor's Office of Tourism will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000.00).***

*Docket #0685, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to purchase goods and services to support the operation of the Strand Theatre. This revolving fund shall be funded by receipts from rental fees for the use of the Strand Theatre. The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (150,000.00).*

*Docket #0686, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to purchase goods and services to support public art to enhance the public realm throughout the City of Boston. This revolving fund shall be funded by receipts from easements within the public way granted by the Public Improvement Commission. The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$800,000.00).*

*Docket #0687, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Distributed Energy Resource Revolving Fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to facilitate the purchase of offsets of greenhouse gas emissions which shall be associated with a portion of the electricity consumed by the City annually; and to operate, maintain, monitor and expand the City's existing solar arrays and Boston Public Schools' combined heat and power facilities. This revolving fund shall be credited with any and all receipts from the sale of renewable and alternative energy certificates and demand response program revenues produced by combined heat and power units located at Boston Public Schools sites and solar renewable energy certificates produced by the City's photovoltaic arrays. Receipts and resulting expenditures from this fund shall not exceed One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00).*

*Docket #0688, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Environment Conservation Commission revolving fund for the Fiscal Year 2025 for the purpose of securing outside consultants including engineers, wetlands scientist, wildlife biologists or other experts in order to aid in the review of proposed projects to the Commission, per the city's ordinance protecting local wetland and promoting climate change adaptation. The revolving fund shall be funded by receipts from fees imposed by the Commission for the purpose of securing outside consultants. The Environment Department will be the only department authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00).*

*Docket #0689, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to pay salaries and benefits of employees and to purchase supplies and equipment necessary to operate the City Hall Child Care. This revolving fund shall be credited with any and all receipts from tuition paid by parents or guardians for children enrolled at the center. Receipts and resulting expenditures from this fund shall not exceed Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$900,000.00).*

*Docket #0690, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Public Schools revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to repair and purchase Boston Public Schools computer technology, including*

*computers, mobile devices, and instructional software. This revolving fund shall be credited with any and all receipts from equipment sales and repair fees for Boston Public School technology. Receipts and resulting expenditures from this fund shall not exceed One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$1,750,000.00)*

*Docket #0691 Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Public Schools revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to support the maintenance and repair for BPS facilities, including custodial and utility costs for extended building time, floor refinishing, landscaping and building repairs. Receipts from Lease, Permit for Use and Parking Fees for BPS facilities will be deposited in the fund. BPS will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall not exceed Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00).*

*Docket #0692, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Public Schools revolving fund for the Fiscal Year 2025 for Boston Public School Transportation cost, including bus and public transportation costs. This revolving fund shall be credited with revenue received by Boston Public School Department for the provision of transportation to groups and entities for field trips and activities other than transportation to and from school. Receipts and resulting expenditures from this fund shall not exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00).*

*Docket #0693, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Police Department revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to support the Canine Unit's training program for officers and police dogs from non-City of Boston law enforcement agencies. The Special Operating Division will charge tuition and other fees to outside law enforcement agencies for the Canine Unit. The tuition and other fees by outside agencies will be used to purchase training equipment, certify instructors, update facilities and provide funds for other training needs not otherwise budgeted. The Special Operations Division will be the only unit authorized to expend from the fund and such expenditures shall be capped at One Hundred Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000.00).*

*Docket #0694, Message and order authorizing a limit for the Boston Police Department revolving fund for Fiscal Year 2025 to pay salaries and benefits of employees and to purchase supplies and equipment necessary to operate the Police Department Fitness Center. Revenue for this fund is derived from monthly membership fees. Receipts and resulting expenditures from this fund shall not exceed One Hundred Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000.00).*

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and were referred to the Committee on April 10, 2024. Some dockets were heard as part of public hearings on topics including Boston Public Schools, Boston Police Department, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, Department of Innovation and Technology, Environment Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, Office of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment and the Office of Arts and Culture, on April 30, 2024, May 6, 2024, May 7, 2024, May 9, 2024, May 13, 2024, May 20, 2024, May 21, 2024, and May 23, 2024.

*Summary of Legislation*

**Dockets #0679-0680** are authorizations of annual appropriations for special department-specific funds: the Parkman Fund and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century PEG Access Fund.

The Parkman Fund is a trust fund designated for the maintenance and upkeep of certain City parks, including the Boston Common, Public Garden, Olmstead Park, Highland Park, Horatio Harris Park, and Malcolm X Park. The fund was established in 1908 from a bequest from George Francis Parkman, and the annual appropriation is used to fund operations, general care and maintenance, specialized maintenance of horticulture and infrastructure, and equipment, infrastructure improvements, and repairs as needed.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century PEG Access Fund was established by Boston's acceptance of a local option, pursuant to Section 53F¾ of Chapter 44 of the General Laws, in 2016. The fund revenue is made up of cable franchise fees, paid by subscribers, from Comcast, RCN, and Verizon. The appropriation is used to support public educational or governmental access to cable television services. The City uses the Fund to support Boston Neighborhood Network (BNN) Media, which provides community, government, and educational access television and radio programming, training, and production services, and Tech Goes Home (TGH), a digital equity initiative that provides low-income and underserved residents in the City with the opportunity, tools, education, and access required for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development. The Fund also supports the City's dark fiber infrastructure, and other cable-related advocacy, auditing, and regulatory service.

**Dockets #0683-0694** are authorizations of revolving fund limits for FY25. Annual authorization of the dollar-limit for each of these revolving funds is required by their enabling legislation, Section 53E½, Chapter 44, Massachusetts General Laws. Revolving funds are an important budgetary tool for departments, as they allow for better financial flexibility in the management of unpredictable and self-sustaining activities. The Committee on Ways and Means has formalized and standardized the review process for these funds by running reviews concurrent with the annual budget review process and departmental budget hearings, with the intent to maintain transparency and accountability in the annual review and authorization of these funds.

#### ***Information Received at Hearings***

These funds are sources of external funding for departments, and the Committee heard dockets together with the relevant departments' budgets. For revolving funds, standardized reporting information consisting of a summary of each revolving fund and the fund's previous year's revenue and expenditures was shared with the Committee for review.

#### ***Committee Chair Recommended Action***

As Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, I recommend moving the listed dockets from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At that time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that these matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

*Brian Worrell*

Brian Worrell, Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means