



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice
Michael Flaherty, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

December 13, 2023

Dear Councilors:

The Committee held a hearing on December 11, 2023 regarding:

Docket #1701, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Three Hundred Fifty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,358,100.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Operation and Safety, referred to Committee on November 15, 2023; Docket #1704, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the FY23 COPS Accreditation Project, referred to Committee on November 15, 2023; Docket #1705, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Forty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Dollars and Forty-Seven Cents (\$47,890.47) in the form of a grant, for the FY22 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program (FP&S), referred to Committee on November 15, 2023; Docket #1749, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00) in the form of grant for the FY23 COPS CD Micro-Grant-Community Policing Development, referred to Committee on November 29, 2023; and, Docket #1796, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Thirteen Million Three Hundred Seventeen Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$13,317,200.00) in the form of a grant from the FY2023 Urban Area Security Initiative, referred to the Committee on December 6th. Mayor Wu sponsored these dockets.

Summary of Legislation as Filed:

Docket #1701, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Three Hundred Fifty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,358,100.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Operation and Safety, awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be administered by the Fire Department. The grant will fund the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment / bailout systems and the training required to use this PPE safely, as well as fund cancer and cardiac screening programs to provide early clinical detection of members, referred to Committee on November 15, 2023.

Docket #1704, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the FY23 COPS Accreditation Project, awarded by the United States Department of Justice to be administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund accreditation process through the purchase of PowerDMS to document objective evidence of CALEA and MPAC requirements, referred to Committee on November 15, 2023.

Docket #1705, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Forty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Dollars and Forty-Seven Cents (\$47,890.47) in the form of a grant, for the FY22 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program (FP&S), awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be administered by the Fire Department. The grant will fund the purchase of an evidence management system and necessary supporting items and provide one-time training to personnel of the Fire Investigation Unit on the use of the system, referred to Committee on November 15, 2023.

Docket #1749, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00) in the form of grant for the FY23 COPS CD Micro-Grant-Community Policing Development, awarded by the United States Department of Justice to be administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund Building Trust and Legitimacy with Community Building. With COPS Community Development Micro funding, the Boston Police Department will hire two full time BRIC Data Analysts to work with the Bureau of Field Services, and the 11 District Captains and Community Service Offices; the Bureau of Community Engagement to help connect with an even wider range of community partners; other Bureaus that will add data and information to the Community CompStat meetings; and the Office of Research and Development's civilian HUB Program Coordinator, who operates 6 District HUB Table convening per week throughout the neighborhoods of Boston, referred to Committee on November 29, 2023.

Docket #1796, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Thirteen Million Three Hundred Seventeen Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$13,317,200.00) in the form of a grant from the FY2023 Urban Area Security Initiative, awarded by the United States Department of Homeland Security, passed through the MA. Executive Office of Public Safety & Security, to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management. The grant will fund planning, exercise, trainings, and operational needs, that will help prevent, respond to and recover from threats of acts of terrorism, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive incidents, referred to the Committee on December 6th. Mayor Wu sponsored these dockets.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The Chair reviewed the dockets and summarized the use of the grant money. The following individuals testified on behalf of the Boston Fire Department ("BFD"): Deputy Commissioner Kevin Coyne, Administration and Finance; Deputy Chief Joseph Shea, Safety, Health and

Wellness Division; Acting Chief Jamie Walsh; Lieutenant Kevin McCarthy, Arson Unit. The following individuals testified on behalf of the Boston Police Department (“BPD”): Gerald Cahill, Deputy Superintendent, Boston Regional Intelligence Center; Marcus Eddings, Superintendent. Maria Cheevers, Research and Development, also participated. Chief Shuemeane Benford, Emergency Management testified in support of Docket #1796.

The BFD will administer Dockets #1701 and #1705. The BPD will administer Dockets #1704 and #1749. the Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management will administer #1796. These grants will provide funding to purchase equipment, provide training, hire positions, and to offer resources to improve the health of employees.

Representatives from the BFD explained that Docket #1701 will provide funding to purchase protective equipment, develop bailout systems, and provide training to improve the safety of firefighters as well as funding for cancer and cardiac screening programs to provide early clinical detection of members. Docket #1705 provides funding to purchase an evidence management system and training of such system to personnel of the Fire Investigation Unit. Lieutenant Kevin McCarthy described the benefits of having this new system which include having a clean temperature controlled room to maintain evidence and will provide the ability to show an evidence trail. The new system will provide a storage facility where evidence will be stored on shelves. This new storage system will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of tracking evidence in fire investigations. BFD explained that they follow the National Fire Protection Association guidelines in preserving evidence. BFD further explained that they have a department chemist that conducts testing and writes a report regarding evidence. Councilors inquired about how many cases BFD investigates.

BFD officials explained that Docket #1701 will provide funding for bailout care systems to develop methods to safely escape fires and training. A portion of the funding will be used for the purchase of ropes as personal protective equipment and the training to use this equipment. The BFD representatives explained that the rope is a last resort escape method. BFD officials explained how the rope would be used and that it is an effective method of getting a firefighter out of a building. Councilors inquired about the equipment and BFD reviewed training procedures. BFD explained that they hope to start the training by the Spring/Summer of 2024 and that there are 33 firehouses that will receive training. BFD also explained that another portion of this grant, approximately \$800,000.00, will be designated to provide additional cancer screenings. The BFD discussed the Safety, Health, and Wellness Division, created by former Commissioner Joseph Finn. The BFD explained that this grant will allow for early detection body scans which is significant because of the amount of young firefighters being diagnosed with cancer and the hazards that come with the occupation. Councilors inquired about the process for screenings and whether the funds in this grant will be able to cover all firefighters. Councilors emphasized the importance of the health and wellness of all City employees and especially the firefighters. Sam Dillon, President of Local 718 spoke in favor of both grants, stating that the FIU is an essential piece of the BFD and that the early detection screenings are necessary because of the hazards of the job and the high rates of cancer diagnoses with firefighters, particularly young firefighters.

Regarding Dockets #1704, #1749, and #1796, representatives from the BPD testified in support and reviewed the purposes of the grant funding. Deputy Superintendent Cahill discussed the implementation of CompStat meetings and explained that the purpose of the meetings is to build trust with the community by sharing information. Deputy Superintendent Cahill explained that the funding in Docket #1749 will provide funding for two data analysts to elicit dialogue with community groups and nonprofits. Deputy Superintendent Cahill stated that CompStat meetings

have been held in B3, C11, E13. The BPD discussed the difference between the CompStat meetings and the HUB tables explaining that the Hub tables are designed to deal with acutely elevated risk individuals and families where social workers and caseworkers are brought in to develop comprehensive service plans. BPD explained that there are currently six HUB tables, one in Melnea Cass and the remainder are district based. Councilors asked about data used to determine CompStat meetings and risk factors that are examined in the HUB tables.

Superintendent Eddings explained that Docket #1704 will provide funding for accreditation to ensure that BPD is meeting standards of professionalism, ethics, accountability, and best practices while reducing liability risks. Superintendent Eddings explained that the purpose of the accreditation is to increase trust with the community through transparency and accountability. Superintendent Eddings also explained that there is a community engagement requirement with the accreditation process.

Chief Benford testified in support of Docket #1796 and explained how the funds will be used. Chief Benford stated that the funds will be used to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism and natural disasters. Chief Benford explained that the Urban Security Initiative will build regional capacity. Chief Benford provided an overview of priority areas and described how the funds are allocated.

Rationale and Recommended Action:

Passage of the BFD grants Docket #1701 will provide funding to purchase necessary equipment to enhance the safety of firefighters as well as provide funding for early cancer detection screenings which is necessary because of occupational hazards. Docket #1705 will provide funding to upgrade the evidence system and room which is essential to the FIU investigations and preserving the chain of evidence. The funding will allow for a temperature controlled room and effective storage space. Passage of Dockets #1704 and #1749 will provide BPD with the resources and tools to build trust with the community through the accreditation process and the hiring of data analysts to identify areas of need and allocation of resources through information sharing and partnering with community groups and nonprofits. Passage of docket #1796 will ensure that the City has the necessary tools and planning capacity to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism and natural disasters.

By the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice, to which the following was referred:

submits a report recommending that these dockets **ought to pass**.

For the Chair:



Michael Flaherty, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice