



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Ways and Means
Brian Worrell, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

September 30, 2024

Dear Councilors,

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

Docket #1335, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Million Three Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$2,322,200.00) in the form of a grant, for the Community Mitigation Grant, awarded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to be administered by the Budget Management. The grant will fund to offset cost related to the construction and operation of a gaming establishment.

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and referred to the Committee on September 11, 2024.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #1335 is an Order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of \$2,322,300 in the form of a grant, Community Mitigation Grant, awarded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to be administered by the Office of Budget Management. The grant would be used to offset costs related to the construction and operation of a gaming establishment.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Thursday, September 26, 2024, to discuss Docket #1335. The Committee was joined by Vineet Gupta, Director of Policy and Planning from the Streets Cabinet, Yuqi Wang, Director of Policy and Planning at the Office of Human Services; Maria Cheevers, Director of the Office of Research and Development at the Boston Police Department (BPD); Deputy Keith Webb of the Youth Violence Strike Force at BPD; Sergeant Detective Marc Sullivan of the Human Trafficking Unit at BPD; and Deputy Superintendent Joe Gillespie for BPD's Area A. Panelists explained that this grant would be used to mitigate the impact of the gaming establishment, the Encore Casino, on the surrounding community.

Director Gupta stated that the Streets Cabinet will receive \$1,605,000 to fund various street-related projects in Charlestown. \$655,000 of this amount will be used to construct road safety improvements at several key intersections, sidewalk ramps and crosswalks in the vicinity of the Encore Casino, specifically on Cambridge Street, Parker Street, Brighton Street, Medford Street, and Caldwell Street. \$500,000 will be used for Charlestown Safety Improvements. This includes the creation of initial "Complete Streets" designs for safety improvements in the Charlestown neighborhood, mainly on Medford Street, Main Street, and Bunker Hill Street. Lastly, \$450,000 will be used to fund the Sullivan/Rutherford redesign, including to help produce early-stage road and traffic signal improvement designs for the Rutherford Avenue reconstruction project to improve vehicular safety and reduce traffic congestion.

Director Wang stated that the Mayor's Office of Human Services will receive \$177,000 to support a participatory action research project that will examine the impact of casino gambling on youth in



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Ways and Means
Brian Worrell, Chair

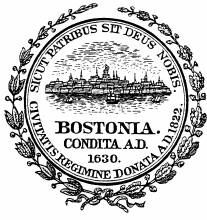
One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

Charlestown. Through this research project, the Office will examine young people's first exposure to gambling, discernible trends in young people's gambling exposures and experiences including race, age, and socioeconomic status; perceptions and attitudes toward Encore Boston Harbor; existing community factors that serve as risk or protective factors for young people in Charlestown; and the role the City can play in protecting youth from being harmed or exploited by gambling. The Office released a Request for Proposal that was opened from Aug. 19 to Sept. 18 for a research partner that will support all aspects of the project. They have received six proposals and are in the process of reviewing the proposals to determine the best fit for this project.

Representatives from BPD stated that the Department will receive \$539,500 to address public safety impacts from the Encore Casino. BPD identified a series of public safety impacts, including human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, assaults, fraud, operating under the influence, traffic-related conflicts and crashes, and other public safety emergencies. With these funds, BPD will implement seven separate strategies to address these impacts. \$71,900 will be used to hire one full-time Public Safety Program Coordinator under BPD's Office of Research and Development (ORD). The Public Safety Coordinator will help with future public safety collaborative efforts with all other law enforcement partners that serve the Encore Casino community, and assist with crime data and analysis needed to track casino-related crime. Secondly, \$40,700 will be used for overtime costs for Detectives in the Human Trafficking Unit (HTU). Overtime costs are related to HTU Detectives that work outside their weekly tour of duty work hours on joint law enforcement surveillance, investigate and mitigate criminal activity on casino property including combating sex trafficking, money laundering and drug-related trafficking. It will also fund specialized training for HTU Detectives. Thirdly, \$45,900 will be used to fund supplies and software for BPD's Homicide Unit's Fatal Collision Accident Investigation Team (FCIT). The FCIT proposed to purchase the following: Forensic Mapping Solutions for recording and documenting evidence located at the collision scene, and Interactive Driver Response Research (IDRR) software that allows the collision reconstructionist to incorporate human factors and driver response research into real-life crash scenarios. Lastly, the FCIT will purchase laptops for detectives to utilize the Forensic Mapping Solution and IDRR software. \$6,000 will be used for overtime costs for various BPD units including \$2,000 for the Fugitive Apprehension unit, \$2,000 for the Drug Control Unit, and \$2,000 for the Youth Violence Strike Force. \$375,000 will be used to fund overtime, supplies and equipment for Area A. Area A covers Area A1 (Downtown Boston) and A15 (Charlestown) Districts, which according to BPD has been negatively impacted by increased traffic flow in and around the roadways connected to the Encore Casino resulting in motor vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle collisions. There has also been an increase in car thefts and motor vehicle larcenies. To mitigate these impacts, detectives from these Districts need additional time to implement strategies to combat these thefts and larcenies. These strategies could include undercover surveillance, community meetings to educate residents about target hardening tactics that protect their cars from theft and larceny, and additional hours to investigate various crimes. It was mentioned that these funds would also support cameras, portable lights and radar signs, and a traffic enforcement pick-up truck. BPD provided a detailed breakdown of these Area 1 costs.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

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



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Ways and Means
Brian Worrell, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

Brian Worrell

Brian Worrell, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means