

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS HENRY SANTANA, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, CULPEPPER, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, MURPHY, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE PUBLIC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR A NEW EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS, Coordination between many City of Boston departments is required to ensure public safety and effective emergency response for winter storms, hurricanes, tropical storms, and other large storms; special events; natural disasters and natural hazards, including flooding, extreme heat or cold, sea level rise, and urban heat islands; outages of power, water, sewer, or other critical services; terrorist or cybersecurity attacks; public health emergencies; and other large-scale threats to public safety; *and*

WHEREAS, During such circumstances, in-person coordination between representatives of many departments is required for effective communication and efficient action, particularly in cases where travel, communications, power, or other critical needs are impeded by the emergency at hand; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston utilizes its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate a centralized response to public safety situations requiring extensive emergency preparedness or emergency response; the EOC also houses the staff of the City of Boston's Office of Emergency Management (OEM); *and*

WHEREAS, The current EOC is inadequately sized to allow co-location of representatives of all necessary departments and services during public safety emergencies and circumstances with large-scale public safety risks, which typically require close collaboration of OEM and Boston 311, along with some mix of the Boston Police Department, Boston Transportation Department, Public Works, Backup 911, Boston Water and Sewer, Boston Fire Department, Boston Emergency Medical Services, Boston Public Health Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, Boston Public Schools, power and energy providers, hospitals and medical facilities, and public and private partners; *and*

WHEREAS, Further, the EOC presently has insufficient restroom, shower, sleeping, and kitchen facilities for multi-day habitation, which is critical during emergencies that limit travel or communication, or require on-call response without delay;

key emergency response personnel may also be victims themselves of the same crisis they are managing on behalf of our community, and be unable to access their homes and need emergency accommodations while serving our city during the emergency, particularly in situations with large-scale impact like hurricanes; *and*

WHEREAS, The current EOC has extremely limited warehouse and storage space, making it impossible to centralize critical supplies for either proactive or emergency response to a variety of public safety threats and crises both exceptional and everyday; examples of services coordinated by OEM that require warehouse space include storage and distribution of food, water, or medications; distribution of coats to communities in need during extreme cold; storage of cooling stations for use during extreme heat; and storage of signage for deployment during special events, natural disasters, and other emergencies; *and*

WHEREAS, As the residential and commercial populations of Boston continue to expand, there is increased need for additional public safety and emergency management facilities, including stations for police, fire, and emergency medical services, which could provide opportunity to also co-locate a new Emergency Operations Center that fully meets the needs of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, New residential, commercial, and institutional developments also raise opportunities for public-private partnerships that could provide space to house a new, fully-equipped Emergency Operations Center with reduced cost to Boston taxpayers; *and*

WHEREAS, As representatives of every neighborhood of the city, the Boston City Council can be an effective partner in identifying opportunities for the development of a new Emergency Operations Center, and can best do so if fully apprised of the requirements for such a facility. ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing regarding the public safety requirements and possible locations for a new Emergency Operations Center in the City of Boston. The Office of Emergency Management, Boston 311, Boston Police Department Telecommunications Unit, and Boston Streets Cabinet will be invited, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

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