



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLICATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF CITY GOVERNMENT, THE CITY CHARTER, AND CITY ORDINANCES

**WHEREAS,** The *Municipal Register* was an official City of Boston public document published as an annual periodical beginning in 1821, with contents varying from volume to volume, but generally containing citations to the City Charter, Special Acts, Codes and Ordinances, rules of the City Council, and listings of City departments and officers, until the final 1990/1991 volume; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The *City Record* is the Official Chronicle of municipal affairs, first published in 1898, serving as a weekly periodical of the municipal news, notices, and all advertisements for the procurement of goods, materials, and services for the City of Boston that are estimated to equal or exceed \$50,000, and, as required by the City Charter, is still in publication today by the City's Purchasing Agent; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Since at least 1911, the City Council had the longstanding practice of annually ordering the publication of a "pocket edition" of *The Organization of City Government*, in addition to the *Municipal Register*, serving as a listing of authorities, boards, commissions, departments, and officers of the City, until the final edition published in 2006; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Council and Mayoral Orders have also periodically, in at least 1972 and 1990, directed the preparation, publication, and public distribution of booklets entitled *Index to City Services*, listing services obtainable through departments and agencies in order to assist residents in navigating the complexity of City government; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In 1975, the Law Department published the *City of Boston Code, Ordinances* as the official codification and consolidation of revised ordinances, rules, and regulations relating to the departments of the City, as well as Massachusetts Special Acts and Charter provisions relating to the City of Boston; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In January 1994, Mayor Menino responded to a 17F Order passed by the Council requesting information on the process of updating City statutes, stating that prior to 1975, Corporation Counsel prepared and edited compilations of the special laws relating to the City, subject to adequate appropriation, that in 1985 the City Clerk and Corporation Counsel arranged to recodify and republish the Ordinances, and the City Clerk or Corporation Counsel were anticipated to request appropriation for the updating and recodification of the statutes; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Since then, compilations of selected Special Acts comprising the City Charter pertaining to public spending, organization of city departments, general powers of the Mayor and City Council, and procedures relating to elections, were

undertaken in 1996 by the Office of the City Clerk, and in 2007 by the City Council under the supervision of its then-Legislative Director; *and*

**WHEREAS,** A chapter titled “Budget Organization and Glossary of Terms,” containing introductory information and an illustrated chart of the organization of City government, is annually published in Volume I of the City’s operating budget, however, members of the public are unlikely to be aware of or able to locate the resource given its location in a thousand-page budget book; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston Zoning Code and Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, the City’s Zoning Enabling Act, are hosted online by the Municipal Code Corporation, or Municode, as amended and generally currently operative; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston Municipal Code, containing the City’s Ordinances, is hosted online by the American Legal Publishing Corporation, as amended and updated periodically; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Orders are contained in compilation, by number and subject, maintained by the Trial Court Law Libraries and provided online to all, in contrast to the City of Boston Executive Orders, where an identifiable location to access them in aggregate is unclear; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In 2010, the City’s Printing Department, renamed the Graphic Arts Department, was disbanded, and although the Purchasing Department assumed responsibility for procuring printing services, the consistent practice of publishing essential official City Documents has not been in place despite digital age advances; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Many of the official City Documents detailing the organization of City government and City services accessible to residents are no longer in regular publication, and while much information has been digitized and accessible on the City website, there is not currently a modern comprehensive compilation of the City’s organization or services, whether digital or in print; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Maintaining the consistent practice of updating and publishing the City’s currently operative governing statutes, ordinances, and orders would not only assist those serving within City government and its legislative body, but also help demystify the workings of City government and increase accessibility for residents, constituents, and members of the public seeking City services and understanding how their local government operates; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the process of updating publications of the organization of City government, the City Charter, and City Ordinances, and that representatives of Corporation Counsel and the Law Department, the Office of the City Clerk, Archives and Records Management, and any other interested members of the public be invited to attend.

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