

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR MINIARD CULPEPPER



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE HOW THE CITY OF BOSTON CAN STRENGTHEN SUPPORT, TRAINING, AND RESOURCE COORDINATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND DISPATCHERS RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

WHEREAS, Dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders are routinely called upon to respond to mental health and behavioral health emergencies and serve an essential role in protecting public safety and connecting individuals in crisis with care and support; *and*

WHEREAS, Emergency dispatchers and 911 call-takers often serve as the first point of contact during behavioral health emergencies and play a critical role in gathering information, coordinating resources, and ensuring that responses are tailored to the needs and safety of individuals in crisis, responding personnel, and the broader community; *and*

WHEREAS, Crisis Intervention Team (“CIT”) training standards in Massachusetts recognize the importance of dispatcher-specific training related to identifying mental health crisis calls, gathering relevant information from callers and collateral contacts, conducting risk assessments, improving de-escalation practices, and appropriately coding and routing calls involving behavioral health emergencies; *and*

WHEREAS, The Massachusetts State 911 Department and Metro Boston CIT programs provide training opportunities and best practices related to crisis intervention, suicide prevention, behavioral health response, cultural competency, coordination between 911 and 988 systems, and communication with individuals experiencing mental health crises; *and*

WHEREAS, As mental health-related emergency calls continue to increase nationwide and locally, it is important that the City of Boston continue exploring opportunities to strengthen training, coordination, responder wellness, resource triaging, and collaboration between first responders, dispatchers, healthcare providers, and behavioral health professionals; *and*

WHEREAS, Supporting first responders and dispatchers with effective tools, training, staffing resources, and coordinated response systems can improve public safety outcomes, strengthen community trust, and help ensure that individuals experiencing crises receive timely and appropriate care; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine how the City of Boston can strengthen support, training, and resource coordination for first responders and dispatchers responding to mental health crises, including but not limited to Crisis Intervention Team training, dispatcher and responder wellness supports, coordination between 911 and 988 systems, behavioral health response partnerships, de-escalation training, communication protocols, and opportunities to improve coordination among police, fire, EMS, dispatch, and public health agencies; and that representatives from the Boston Police Department, Boston Fire Department, Boston Emergency Medical Services, the Boston Public Health Commission and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: May 13, 2026