

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



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING ALL CITY OF BOSTON GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, In accordance with MGL c.44, §53A, and as incorporated in the City of Boston Charter §51 “Grants and Gifts; Acceptance and Expenditure,” as prepared and distributed by the Boston City Council, July 2007:

“An officer or department of any city or town ... may accept grants or gifts of funds from the federal government and from a charitable foundation, a private corporation, or an individual, or from the commonwealth, a county or municipality or an agency thereof, and ... may expend such funds for the purposes of such grant or gift with the approval of the Mayor and City Council.”;
and

WHEREAS, The Boston Fire Department routinely applies for and receives a wide variety of grants and gifts from the federal government, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, charitable foundations, private corporations, and individuals, and such funding represents a significant source of revenue for the Boston Fire Department, and provides for critical staff, equipment, and operations; *and*

WHEREAS, Such grants and gifts include both non-competitive grants, which are allocated by federal and state government entities in proportion to available resources and need, as determined by such entities; as well as competitive grants and gifts, which are applied for by the City of Boston, and awarded by both governmental and non-governmental entities on the basis of the merits of the City’s application;
and

WHEREAS, The quality and breadth of the applications for competitive grants and gifts submitted by the City of Boston to grant-making entities substantially affects the the resources available to serve the public safety needs of residents, businesses, workers, and visitors in Boston, and it is therefore critical that sufficient staffing and resources are provided to the Boston Fire Department to pursue competitive grants and gifts, which can only be accomplished with full awareness by the Boston City Council of current and ongoing grant applications; *and*

WHEREAS, Non-competitive grants awarded by federal and state governmental entities can be highly variable in dollar amount and scope in accordance with changes in federal and state budgets and priorities, and it is critical that the Boston City Council remains apprised of these variations from year to year, and that the City of Boston adjusts City funding and services accordingly; *and*

WHEREAS, In compliance with the aforementioned Massachusetts General Law and City of Boston Charter, upon receipt of a grant or gift to the City of Boston to be administered by the Boston Fire Department, the Mayor of Boston files a legislative order with the Boston City Council to accept and expend or make use of such grant or gift; *and*

WHEREAS, Once filed with the City Council, the City Council President refers such orders to a City Council Committee, which reviews the grant or gift and associated mayoral order, and thereafter provides a recommendation for formal action by the whole City Council body to approve or disapprove of the City of Boston accepting such grant or gift, at which time all Councilors are free to vote on the order at their discretion; *and*

WHEREAS, In the past 12 months, the City Council Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice conducted such reviews and recommendations for formal action on grants administered by the Boston Fire Department totaling \$5,593,221.51; *and*

WHEREAS, Due to such orders to accept grants or gifts being filed at the time of receipt by the City of Boston, reviewing these orders solely at the time of filing would provide a haphazard and incomplete picture of grants and funding sources for the Boston Fire Department, as there are a multitude of funding sources even for individual programs, services, teams, equipment purchases, maintenance, and operations, from both various grants and gifts, as well as City funds and other sources; *and*

WHEREAS, By instead conducting its oversight role proactively and with a holistic approach, rather than solely reacting to legislative orders filed by the Mayor upon receipt of grants or gifts, the City Council can better ensure public safety and the effective funding and function of the Boston Fire Department, while providing greater public transparency. ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing regarding all grants administered by the Boston Fire Department (BFD). Representatives of BFD who manage the application for, receipt of, and disbursement of grants and gifts administered by BFD will be invited, along with on-the-ground members of the BFD providing critical public safety services. Interested parties and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

Filed in Council: February 25, 2025