



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS RESOURCES FOR THE BOSTON POLICE CRIME LABORATORY

- WHEREAS:** The Boston Police Crime Laboratory is a critical part of our Boston Police Department, as its work in processing, examining, and analyzing evidence, such as sexual assault kits, is indispensable to the investigation and solving of crimes; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In 2018, the state legislature mandated that sexual assault kits be tested within 30 days, in order to ensure swift processing of evidence that will bring justice for sexual assault survivors. However, in an annual report by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), it found that half of the kits were not tested within a 30 day window by the the BPD Crime Laboratory; *and*
- WHEREAS:** According to the report, the lab received 186 sexual assault kits in FY23 between June 2022 and June 2023, and 93 of which it did not managed to test within 30 days. In FY22, it failed to test 39 of the 144 kits within 30 days, and 24 of the 123 kits in FY 21. By comparison, the State Police Crime Laboratory tested 96% of the 714 kits it received within 30 days in FY23; *and*
- WHEREAS:** At the hearing in 2024, Boston Police explained that there were staffing shortages at the Crime Lab, and that while there were 22 employees in the lab, there were open positions that needed to be filled as well as staff who were on leave. These staffing shortages have impacted the time in which the sexual assault kits are tested, resulting in an average of 54 days to test a rape kit; *and*
- WHEREAS:** During the FY 25 budget process, the Boston City Council voted to internally reallocate \$1 million within the Boston Police Department to support the work of the Boston Police Crime Lab. This included \$700,000 from BPD Personnel Services to the Crime Lab to increase the number of lab techs and to fill the director vacancy, and \$300,000 from BPD Equipment to the Crime Lab to purchase new sexual assault testing equipment; *and*
- WHEREAS:** At last year's hearing, questions were raised regarding prior leaves of absence and vacancies in the Director position and their impact on staff morale, training, and mentorship. The panel stated that, despite staffing challenges related to the Director role, the Lab continued operations and its work remained unaffected. The panel was also asked about the budget amendment in the amount of \$1 million for the Crime Lab, including funding for Y-screening technology, and indicated that the funding was not approved; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In addition, there was also a lack of stability in leadership at the Crime Lab due to a rotating number of interim directors after its leader was placed on leave in August 2022 amidst an ongoing internal investigation; *and*
- WHEREAS:** It is important that the sexual assault kits and evidence from our sexual assault survivors be processed in a timely manner, and that the Boston Police Department address the

staffing shortage at the Crime Laboratory; *and*

WHEREAS: Since last year's hearing, it is important to find out if there are any updates with regard to staffing, compensation and benefits level, and any equipment upgrades that have allowed crime lab staff to perform their work more easily and efficiently, and whether additional resources are still required; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to find out about any staffing and equipment updates at the Boston Police Crime Laboratory, as well as ways to ensure that the Crime Lab has the appropriate resources to operate smoothly and test sexual assault kits on time. Representatives from the Boston Police Department and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 8, 2025