



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice

Henry Santana, *Chair*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 16, 2022

Dear Councilors:

The Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #0342, message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expand the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Five Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars and Twelve Cents (\$1,705,475.12) in the form of a grant, for the FY24 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative, awarded by MA Executive Office of Public Safety & Security to be Administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund regional and multi-disciplinary approaches to combat gang violence through coordinated prevention and intervention, law enforcement, prosecution and reintegration programs.

Docket #0504, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount Forty-Four Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$44,100.00) in the form of a grant, for the Boston Violence Intervention & Prevention Initiative (CVIPI), awarded by the United States Department of Justice, passed through the Boston Public Health Commission, to be administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund BPD's ability to support the project with relevant crime data reporting and, if available, assign a BPD representative to participate with CVIPI Planning/Advisory Committee.

Docket #0577, message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expand the amount of Eighty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$84,000.00) in the form of a grant, FY24 CISM Grant, awarded by the MA Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to be administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund access to critical incidents stress management and peer support programs to address mental wellness and suicide prevention for BPD officers.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and were referred to the Committee on February 14, 2024 (#0342), March 13, 2024 (#0504), and March 27, 2024 (#0577), respectively. A public hearing was held on Friday, April 12, 2024. We were joined by Councilors Erin Murphy, Ed Flynn, Benjamin Weber, and Sharon Durkan.

The Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice heard testimony from Boston Police Department (BPD) officials including: DeMon Bills, Project Coordinator, BPD, (Docket #0342), Lieutenant Brian McManus, BPD (Docket #0504), Tania Mireles, Director, Violence Intervention & Prevention Initiative (VIP), Boston Public Health Commission (#0504), and Sergeant Joseph King, Director, BPD Peer Support & Family Assistance Unit (#0577).

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0342 is a grant funding of \$1,705,475.12 for the Boston Police Department's FY24 Senator Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative program. This grant investment initiative supports the City of Boston's comprehensive strategy using regional and multi-disciplinary approaches and collaborations amongst various state and city agencies, and also partnerships with faith-based, philanthropic, and business organizations within the community, specifically targeting hot spot areas in the City of Boston. It is used to reduce gang violence through coordinated prevention and intervention, law enforcement, prosecution, and reintegration programs aimed at reducing gun, gang, and youth violence in the city.

The BPD Project Coordinator, DeMon Bills, testified in support of the funding for the FY24 Senator Charles Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative. Mr. Bills stated that in 2015, the BPD began an annual competitive bid process to apply for the Shannon grant, opening the grants to all non-profits, and allowed funds to be granted to organizations with vested community interest in addressing and responding to youth violence through a variety of methods. He explained that the BPD receives about 50 applications and funds 20 organizations, and described the resources and organizations that the funding supports.

Mr. Bills reported that since its inception in 2006 to the end of 2023, BPD has seen a 16% decrease in homicides, a 9% decrease in aggravated assaults, and a 10% decrease in total violent crime all through the investment of \$350 per young person. Mr. Bills explained that this grant initiative is to provide programs and resources that serve positive youth development and recreation activities.

The Committee also heard testimony from a representative of the Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) about the importance of this funding to support programs to prevent violence and its positive impact on Boston's youth.

Docket #0504 is a grant in the amount of \$44,100.00 from the Boston Public Health Commission to be administered by the Boston Police Department for the Boston Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention (CVIPI) program. The grant will fund an intern position with the BPD's Office of Research & Development, who will work in coordination with the Boston Public Health Commission Project Coordinator on the Implementation of the CVIPI Project. The BPD will provide relevant crime data collection, analysis, and reporting, and more in support of the Boston CVIPI and assign a BPD representative to participate with CVIPI planning and Advisory Committee.

Director Tania Mireles of the BPD Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative testified that this grant supports a comprehensive, evidence-based violence and intervention program based on partnerships amongst community members, residents, local government agencies, victim survivors, community-based organizations, law enforcement, hospitals, researchers, and other community stakeholders. She reported that in FY23 the Boston Public Commission was awarded \$2M over the course of three years. She indicated that this initiative seeks to prevent and reduce violent crime in Boston's neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan by engaging returning citizens in programming that addresses their needs and strengthens the support of the family, caregivers, and other community connections necessary for their successful re-entry back into the communities.

Sergeant Joseph King testified on **Docket #0577**, a grant of \$84,000.00 for the Boston Police Department's FY24 Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) grant program. Now in its second year, this grant program assists municipal police departments in delivering critical services to police

officers and other responders in the event of traumatic incidents. Sergeant King reported that the resources provided through this grant support crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and vital other services for members of our law enforcement in the aftermath of a traumatic incident, noting that police officers have the highest risk of dying from suicide. He highlighted that this program invests in the well-being of officers and, by extension, their families and the communities they serve. Sergeant King highlighted that this initiative is a vetted and proven program.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice, I recommend moving the listed dockets from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At that time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that **Dockets #0342, #0504, and #0577 OUGHT TO PASS.**

Henry A. Santana

Henry Santana, Chair
Committee on Public Safety & Criminal Justice