



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on City Services and Innovation Technology
Brian Worrell, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

July 19, 2023

Dear Councilors:

The Committee on City Services and Innovation Technology was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #1097, Message and order for your approval, an order to reduce the FY23 appropriation for the Reserve for Collective Bargaining by One Million Two Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-One Dollars (\$1,273,531.00) to provide funding for the Boston Public Health Commission for FY23 increases contained within the collective bargaining agreements between the Boston Public Health Commission and the Boston EMS Division of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association. Filed in the Office of the City Clerk on June 12, 2023.

Docket #1098, Message and order for your approval a supplemental Order for the Public Health Commission for FY23 in the amount of One Million Two Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-One Dollars (\$1,273,531.00) to cover FY23 cost items contained within the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston Public Health Commission and the Boston EMS Division of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association. The terms of the contracts are July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023 and July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026. The major provisions of the contracts include base wage increases of 1.5% in July of 2021, 2% in July 2022, 2% in July 2023, 2% in July 2024, and 2% in July 2025. The agreements also contain other benefits including a mobile integrated health/community EMS adjustment and increased hazardous duty differentials.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and referred to the Committee on June 14, 2023.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #1097 transfers funds from the Reserve for Collective Bargaining to provide funding for the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), and Docket #1098 authorizes the funding of the collective bargaining agreements between BPHC and the Boston EMS Division of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association. The terms of the contracts are July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023 and July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026 with an estimated cost of \$1,273,531.

The major provisions of the contracts include base wage increases of 1.5% in July of 2021, 2% in July 2022, 2% in July 2023, 2% in July 2024, and 2% in July 2025. The agreements also contain other benefits including a mobile integrated health/community EMS initiatives and increased hazardous duty differentials.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a public hearing on Dockets #1097-1098 on Monday, July 17, 2023. The Committee was joined by Jim Hooley, Chief of Boston EMS, Jim Williamson, Budget Director for the City of Boston; Lou Mandarini, Senior Advisor for Labor; Matthew Anderson, EMS Union President; and Nicholas Mutter, EMS Union Secretary all of whom provided testimony on behalf of the Administration.

Mr. Williamson stated that Docket #1097 reduces the Reserve for Collective Bargaining from the prior fiscal year (FY23) and transfers these funds to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) budget in the amount of \$1,273,531. In the FY23 budget, approved in June of 2022, there was about \$75 million towards the Reserve established for collective bargaining. Since July of 2022, there have been 15 collective bargaining agreements approved. Currently, the Reserve for Collective Bargaining has a total of \$34 million once this agreement is approved. Docket #1098 authorizes the funding of the collective bargaining agreements between BPHC and the Boston EMS Division of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association

Mr. Mandarini stated that the Administration is proud of this contract and believes it is fair and provides economic security to the workers it will impact. This contract raises the wages of these workers both through general wage increases and a premium related to Mobile Integrated Health.

Mr. Mandarini stated that the contract will implement a mandatory influenza vaccine and Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) initiative which has the ability to reshape how Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), paramedics and others respond to emergencies and gives the opportunity for diversion, and different responses to the people of Boston in need of emergency services.

Chief Hooley discussed MIH and stated that it allows for new patient centered response models including the transfer of 911 calls to telehealth providers, alternative responses by non-ambulance response units, and transport to non-hospital facilities. MIH programs include TeleBEST - a program that allows willing patients that have demonstrated low acuity behavioral health emergencies to be transferred from a 911 call taker to behavioral healthcare clinician through the Boston Emergency Services Team (BEST), alternative destination transport for patients experiencing substance use disorder by taking them to a stabilization care center, and the Alternative Response Unit that would have an EMT partner with a BEST behavioral health clinician to respond to emergencies.

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Mutter discussed that the implementation of the MIH programs will improve the future of Boston EMS by allowing EMTs and paramedics to deliver the right care and diversify the type of care they can provide patients. Mr. Anderson stated that he is hopeful that with this contract Boston EMS will be able to improve recruitment efforts and attract more diverse candidates.

Councilors and the panel also discussed various topics including Boston EMS retention and attrition rates, the need to hire more EMTs, job training for new initiatives, the state of 911 call takers, residency requirements for Boston EMS workers, and quality of life issues related to working for Boston EMS.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on City Services and Innovation Technology, 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 the matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Brian Worrell

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