

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN,  
FITZGERALD, FERNANDES ANDERSON, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA,  
WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT HIRING PROCESS AND PRACTICES

- WHEREAS:** For over a century, the hiring process for Firefighters in the City of Boston has been governed by Civil Service Law. Chapter 31 of Massachusetts General Laws ensures that appointments are guided by basic merit principles rather than bias, favoritism, or nepotism; *and*
- WHEREAS:** As the Boston Fire Department expands its authority to hire new recruits through a hybrid approach outside the traditional civil service process, concerns have been raised on whether the Boston Fire Department is lowering the standards and qualifications for Boston Firefighters. It is important to discuss whether the hiring process is circumventing basic regulations in determining who is hired to protect our residents from fire and other safety emergencies; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Objectivity is critical for life-saving and safety-sensitive positions. Firefighters must pass an examination, satisfy residency requirements, complete a background investigation, and graduate from the physically and intellectually demanding Boston Fire Academy. Nearly every Boston Firefighter hired in the past several years has scored 95 or higher on the examination; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Massachusetts state law has provided a veterans preference for appointment to civil service positions since the 19th century, first for veterans of the Civil War. The current statutory preference dates back to 1896 and has been expanded to encompass veterans of subsequent wars. Today, the United States Armed Forces is one of the most diverse organizations in the world; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In 2021, the State and the City of Boston enacted a cadet program that allows the Boston Fire Department to recruit without going through the Civil Service hiring process for up to one-third of new hires, provided that the cadet completes a two-year program and passes the Civil Service exam; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In 2024, the Massachusetts State Legislature enacted legislation to allow municipalities to hire up to 50 percent of public safety hires entirely outside of the traditional Civil Service process. This has negatively impacted the hiring of veterans and service-connected veterans, who are qualified candidates with experience persevering in highly-stressful and physically rigorous situations; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In May 2025, a Boston Fire Academy class included several cadets who have reportedly failed to pass or complete components of the cadet program. Many

have reportedly been unable to satisfactorily complete tests within the first 4 weeks of the Academy, after 2 years of paid cadet training including benefits; *and*

**WHEREAS:** It is critical that our Firefighters who are in charge of our public's safety are qualified and meet Boston Fire Department's training standards. The City of Boston must ensure fair hiring practices based on standard merit principles; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:**

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the Boston Fire Department hiring process and practices. Representatives from the Boston Fire Department, Human Resources Department, Office of Labor Relations and Boston Firefighters Local 718, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

**Filed in Council: June 25, 2025**