



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice

Michael Flaherty, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

August 10, 2022

Dear Councilors:

The Committee held a hearing on July 26, 2022 on the below public safety dockets to be administered by the Boston Police Department (“BPD”) and the Boston Fire Department (“BFD”). Mayor Wu sponsored the dockets.

Summary of Legislation as Filed:

Docket #0274, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Three Dollars and Ten Cents (\$1,642,723.10) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative, awarded by the 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, referred to Committee on February 16, 2022;

Docket #0348, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$237,500.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 HazMat Earmark, awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services to be administered by the Fire Department. The grant will fund decontamination equipment, vehicle and maintenance expenses for the Hazard Response Team at Boston Fire Department, referred to Committee on March 9, 2022;

Docket #0349, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) in the form of grant, for the FY22 COVID-19 SA/DV Trust Fund, awarded by the Department of Public Health to be administered by the Police Department. The grant will fund two full-time Domestic Violence advocates who will work with social service agency partners at the BPHC Family Justice Center, referred to Committee on March 9, 2022;

Docket #0375, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Five Hundred Fifty Five Thousand One Hundred Sixty Six Dollars and Forty Cents (\$555,166.40) in the form of a grant, for the Federal FY20 Assistance to Firefighters Grant, awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be administered by the Fire Department. The grant will fund safety training and fitness equipment to support officer health and wellness, referred to committee on March 16, 2022.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The Chair reviewed the dockets and summarized the use of the grant money. The following representatives from the BFD attended the hearing and testified in support of the grants for the BFD, Dockets #0348 and #0375: Commissioner Paul Burke; Chief of Operations Robert Calobrisi; Chief of Operations Rodney Marshall; and, Deputy Commissioner Kathleen Judge. The following individuals from the BPD participated and testified in support of Dockets #0274 and #0349: Maria Cheevers, Director, Office of Research and Development; DeMon Bills, Project Coordinator, Office of Research and Development; and, Captain Therese Kozmiski, Family Justice Center.

Docket #0274 would authorize the expenditure in the amount of \$1,642,723.10 for FY22 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative (“Shannon Grant”). Mr. Bills reviewed the objectives of the Shannon Grant which include supporting the City’s comprehensive strategy to combat gang and youth gun violence in Boston by providing services to at-risk and gang affiliated youth by providing opportunities and intervention strategies to combat gang violence. Mr. Bills described the types of programs and the procedures. Mr. Bills stated that the Shannon Grant has successfully collaborated with community, faith based, social services, and law enforcement partnerships using elements of opportunity provision, social intervention, and prevention strategies to provide community mobilization and organizational change and development. Mr. Bills explained that in 2015 a competitive RFP process was established for nonprofit organizations to apply, specifically nonprofits that serve neighborhoods that are most impacted by high rates of violence. Mr. Bills stated that the BPD is working to get more organizations to apply. Mr. Bills explained that the Shannon Grant has its main partners that are crucial to its purposes which include BCYF Centers, the Boston Public Health Commission, YOU Boston, the Suffolk County DA’s Office, Youth Connect, Boston Medical Center VIAP. Mr. Bills explained that there are about 50 applicants per year and that the BPD tries to spread out the resources so that there are not similar programs. Mr. Bills explained that between 2006-2020, the programs and resources from the Shannon Grant helped to reduce homicides, aggravated assaults, and total violent crimes and that there has been an increase in investment to \$350.00 per young person.

Docket #0348 will earmark \$237,500.00 for the HazMat earmark for the BFD. The funds will be used for decontamination equipment as well as vehicle and maintenance expenses for the Hazard Response Team at the BFD. Chief Calobrisi explained that about \$67,000.00 will be used for a HazMat vehicle, a 2022 Chevy Tahoe that will be equipped with all the equipment and materials necessary to respond to a hazmat incident. Chief Calobrisi explained that the BFD will purchase suits that are encapsulated and geared to respond to hazardous spills. Chief Calobrisi stated that the HazMat suits provide total protection and that the BFD will purchase 20 suits in the amount of \$46,000.00. The BFD will also purchase a specialized piece of equipment that is designed to

improve the efficiency of solid gas and liquid determination called a Red Wave Gas Spectrometer in the amount of \$125,000.00.

Docket #0349 will provide \$150,000.00 to fund two full-time Domestic Violence advocates who will work with social service agency partners at the BPHC Family Justice Center. Captain Kozmiski offered testimony supporting the grant and explained that the advocates provide vital outreach services and support to domestic violence victims. Captain Kozmiski explained that the advocates reach out to victims of domestic violence and provide services including assistance with obtaining restraining orders. The BPD explained that the advocates will be in the local districts B3 and B2 and assisting in C11. The BPD stated that the services begin when there is an incident report and that the advocates are there to offer services even if there are no charges. The BPD explained that the advocates sign a confidentiality agreement and develop comprehensive plans to assist victims. Councilors inquired how the City can be proactive in helping victims. Captain Kozmiski explained that there is a translation line for victims and that the main focus is on providing services to victims.

Docket #0375 is a grant in the amount of \$555,166.40 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) to be used to purchase exercise equipment and to fund safety training in order to promote and support the health and wellness of firefighters. Commissioner Burke reviewed the priorities of the BFD and explained that the department will also contribute \$55,000.00 for safety training, fitness, and wellness programs and that the wellness of firefighters is a priority. Councilors discussed the importance of prioritizing the wellness of firefighters both physical and mental. The Commissioner described the safety protocols and the cleaning procedures explaining that there are instructions posted in firehouses not to take the gear upstairs and that firefighters are told to shower when returning to get the toxins out. The Commissioner explained that the cleaning machines are also used for the bunker gear.

Rationale and Recommended Action:

Passage of Docket #0274 will ensure that the successful programs and resources of the Shannon Grant will continue. Passage of Docket #0348 will ensure necessary upgrades to hazmat materials to ensure that the HazMat technicians are fully protected and the equipment is efficient and functional. Passage of Docket #0349 will ensure the hiring of two domestic violence advocates to assist victims and provide resources. Passage of Docket #0375 will ensure that the BFD has the proper equipment and resources to support the physical health and wellness of firefighters.

By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

Docket #0274, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Three Dollars and Ten Cents (\$1,642,723.10) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative;

Docket #0348, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$237,500.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 HazMat Earmark;

Docket #0349, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) in the form of grant, for the FY22 COVID-19 SA/DV Trust Fund; and,

Docket #0375, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Five Hundred Fifty Five Thousand One Hundred Sixty Six Dollars and Forty Cents (\$555,166.40) in the form of a grant, for the Federal FY20 Assistance to Firefighters Grant, awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

submits a report recommending that these dockets ought to pass.

For the Chair:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Flaherty", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Michael Flaherty, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice