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

CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE BOSTON EMS DISPATCH PHONE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Boston Emergency Medical Services (EMS), a bureau of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), staffs its Dispatch Operations Center with certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who are specially trained to provide emergency medical triage and life-saving instructions—including CPR, childbirth guidance, and airway management—over the phone while coordinating rapid ambulance response;

WHEREAS, Unlike Boston Police dispatchers—who are members of SEIU Local 888 and recently secured significant wage increases reflecting the critical nature of their work—EMS call-takers, despite performing clinical and life-saving duties, are paid considerably less, highlighting a concerning disparity between first responder roles;

WHEREAS, In addition to wage disparities, Boston EMS continues to operate with an outdated and less reliable phone system than that used by Boston Police and Fire dispatch centers, a technological gap that creates operational inefficiencies, safety risks, and delays in emergency medical response;

WHEREAS, Updating and modernizing the EMS dispatch phone system is vital to ensure that Boston EMS call-takers have the tools needed to provide the highest standard of emergency medical care and coordinate effectively with hospitals, public safety agencies, and field responders;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED: That the Committee on Public Health, Mental Health, and Recovery hold a formal hearing to examine the current state of the Boston EMS dispatch phone system, assess the operational challenges posed by its outdated infrastructure, and explore necessary investments and upgrades to enhance emergency medical communications. Representatives from Boston EMS, the Boston Public Health Commission, emergency communications experts, and other relevant stakeholders shall be invited to testify.

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