



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Boston's COVID-19 Recovery

Michael F. Flaherty, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

October 20, 2021

Dear Councillors:

The Committee held a hearing on Dockets #0994, #0995, #0996, #0997, #0999 and #1001, various grants under the American Rescue Plan to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. These orders were sponsored by Acting Mayor Janey and referred to the Committee on September 22, 2021. The Committee held a hearing on October 14, 2021 where public comment was taken. The dockets are described as follows:

Docket #0994, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Six Hundred Three Thousand One Hundred Twelve Dollars (\$1,603,112.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act, Title III-B awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. The grant will fund Supportive Services for older adults in Boston, for the period 4/1/21 through 6/30/22.

Docket #0995, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Four Hundred Six Thousand Three Hundred Thirty One Dollars (\$1,406,331.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act-Title III-C Nutrition program, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. The grant will fund nutrition services for older adults in Boston, for the period 4/1/21 through 6/30/22.

Docket #0996, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Four Hundred Twenty Three Thousand One Hundred Seventy Dollars (\$423,170.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act- Title III-A, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. The grant will fund administration costs for planning and implementation by the Age Strong Commission, from 4/1/2021 to 9/14/2021.

Docket #0997, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Three Hundred Ninety Four Thousand One Hundred Thirty Three Dollars (\$394,133.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act, Title III-E, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age

Strong Commission. The grant will fund Family Caregiver Services for older adults in Boston, for the period 4/1/2021 through 6/30/22.

Docket #0999, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Two Dollars (\$157,522.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act, Title III-D, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. The grant will fund the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, for the period 4/1/21 through 6/30/22.

Docket #1001, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expand the amount of One Hundred Forty Thousand One Hundred Twenty-One Dollars (\$140,121.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act, Title III-D, awarded by the U.S. Department of Human Health and Services, passed through the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to be administered by the Age Strong Commission. The grant will fund preventative health services for older adults in Boston, for the period 4/1/21 through 6/30/22.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The following individuals from the Administration and the Age Strong Commission attended the hearing and offered comments: Commissioner Emily Shea; Francis Thomas, Director of A & F; and, Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Partnerships, Melissa Carlson. The Committee discussed how the funds would be used.

Commissioner Shea explained that the Age Strong Commission typically receives these funds every year through the Older Americans Act and that more money is available this year through the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”). Commissioner Shea described the services that the funding is used for. The services include supportive services, nutrition services, caregiver services, administrative funds, and the Ombudsman program. Commissioner Shea explained that some funds will be used in-house but that a majority of the funds will be used for the aging services network. Commissioner Shea explained that the Age Strong Commission works with 24 grantees through an RFP process and that Age Strong partners with community organizations to run these programs and services. Commissioner Shea explained that the community organizations help reach a broader section of communities and to extend the network in order that older adults have access to the network at any time. Commissioner Shea explained that the funds will be put through the RFP process next spring with the funds going out in May. Commissioner Shea also stated that there may also be an RFP this year.. Commissioner Shea stated that the funds will go out to the organizations that are working with the City and that the funds through the ARPA may be used for outreach. Commissioner Shea also explained that there will be an RFP for mental health and wellness services for older adults.

The Chair inquired about distribution of the funds and whether any of the funds have been received. Commissioner Shea explained that some of the funds are cost reimbursement funds and can be billed back to April 1, 2021. Commissioner Shea stated that no funds have been spent. The Chair asked where the funds will be spent and how will the Age Strong Commission measure impact. Commissioner Shea explained that the funds will pass through to organizations that currently run the programs. Commissioner Shea explained that the standards are outlined in the Older Americans Act and that the Age Strong Commission follows the structures in that Act. Commissioner Shea stated that the extra funds will allow for outreach and that the scope of services and budget of grantees needs to be approved. Councilor Mejia asked about food insecurity, cultural competency, partnerships with small businesses, partnerships with nonprofits for caregivers, health services and incorporating mental health. Commissioner Shea explained

that the nutrition services is a multi-scope program that provides assessments, counseling services, and nutrition information in addition to meals. Commissioner Shea explained that the nutritional requirements are federal and state based. Commissioner Shea explained that the Age Strong Commission is working to have a webinar to bring in local restaurants that may be interested in the program. Commissioner Shea explained that the providers use best practices for home health and that with regard to caregivers the funds are used to help caregivers navigate services such as support services and that the funds are not connected to home health. Commissioner Shea explained that with regard to the health services under Title III D, the federal government has a list of healthy aging programs that can be paid with these funds. Councilor Breadon inquired about elder economic security issues and hiring health care and home care workers. Councilor O'Malley and Councilor Flynn expressed support for the Age Strong Commission and the various programs.

Rationale and Recommended Action:

Passage of these dockets will authorize increased funding to enhance the services provided by the Age Strong Commission. The additional funding will allow the Age Strong Commission to continue its work with outside community organizations throughout the City that provide supportive services for seniors and under the ARPA the City will be able to use funds for outreach services in order to ensure that seniors have access to the services network.

By the Chair of the Committee on Boston's COVID-19 Recovery, to which the following were referred:

- ***Docket #0994***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Six Hundred Three Thousand One Hundred Twelve Dollars (\$1,603,112.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act;
- ***Docket #0995***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Four Hundred Six Thousand Three Hundred Thirty One Dollars (\$1,406,331.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act;
- ***Docket #0996***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Four Hundred Twenty Three Thousand One Hundred Seventy Dollars (\$423,170.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act;
- ***Docket #0997***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Three Hundred Ninety Four Thousand One Hundred Thirty Three Dollars (\$394,133.00) in the form of a grant for the American Rescue Plan Act;
- ***Docket #0999***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Two Dollars (\$157,522.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act; and,
- ***Docket #1001***, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expand the amount of One Hundred Forty Thousand One Hundred Twenty-One Dollars (\$140,121.00) in the form of a grant, for the American Rescue Plan Act,

submits a report recommending that these orders **ought to pass.**

For the Chair:



Michael F. Flaherty, Chair
Committee on Boston's COVID-19 Recovery

