

Offered by Councilors Kenzie Bok and Andrea Campbell



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING BOSTON POLICE OVERTIME

- WHEREAS:* Black and brown activists nationwide continue to lead conversations about the cost to municipalities of police, including police overtime, especially given the opportunity cost of spending limited municipal resources on additional policing rather than on increasing mental health and addiction services, investments in education and housing, and other pressing community needs; *and*
- WHEREAS:* The City of Boston has experienced significant reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health crisis in FY21, and fiscal policy scholars have advised against repeating the fiscal mistakes of the Great Recession, when municipalities generally cut overall public investments while allowing police overtime costs to grow; *and*
- WHEREAS:* The City of Boston’s police overtime budget for FY20 was \$60 million, an amount for overtime alone that dwarfs the full City operating budget for departments like the Boston Public Library (\$41 million), the Department of Neighborhood Development (\$29 million), and Parks & Recreation (\$26 million); *and*
- WHEREAS:* Police overtime is one area of the City budget that is legally permitted to run over, and exceeded its FY20 budget allocation by \$12.5 million, with such overruns coming out of reserves and unspent money from other areas of City investment, thereby further shifting the effective prioritization of City dollars proportionately towards policing; *and*
- WHEREAS:* According to reporting on June 17, 2020 by Matt Rocheleau and Dugan Arnett of the Boston Globe, the average Boston Police Department (BPD) employee made an average of \$127,094 in FY19, including almost \$30,000 in overtime, while more than 500 earned more than \$200,000 in salary; *and*
- WHEREAS:* A Boston Globe review of the city’s personnel costs found that BPD’s payroll has increased 43% (\$125 million) since 2011, which includes an 84% (\$35.5 million) increase in overtime, outstripping personnel cost increases in civilian departments; *and*
- WHEREAS:* The decision to “true-up” police overtime costs in the City of Boston’s FY17 budget only seems to have contributed to a further increase in those costs overall; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On June 12, 2020 Mayor Walsh announced a reallocation of 20% or \$12 million of the BPD overtime budget to other city departments, and this reallocation was approved by the City Council on June 24, 2020 as a part of the FY21 operating budget; *and*

WHEREAS: On Tuesday, July 28th, 2020 and Monday, November 16th, 2020 the Boston City Council Ways and Means Committee held a hearing to discuss the City of Boston and Boston Police Department's oversight protocols for police overtime and their progress towards achieving promised reductions in the City's FY21 police overtime budget; *and*

WHEREAS: The Boston Police Department's budget data analysis presentation in November 2020 revealed that overtime hours were cut by 14.6%, largely due to COVID-19 related savings, and that greater procedural changes were needed to get on track to reduce the police overtime budget by 20%; *and*

WHEREAS: Such procedural changes to reduce overtime might include reforms to specify and more stringently analyze minimum staffing levels, reduce military exercises, halt the over-policing of black and brown men through disproportionate stops, and take other key measures to respond to community distrust; *and*

WHEREAS: According to reporting on December 21, 2020 by Ally Jarmanning and Saurabh Datar of WBUR, based on departmental data, more than 12% of Boston Police officers are on medical leave, a concerning five-year trend that has worsened in recent years, is creating overtime costs equivalent to nearly 100 replacement officers, and points to an ineffective medical leave management process while also raising concerns about officer health and well-being; *and*

WHEREAS: Several cases of overtime fraud and embezzlement by Boston Police employees have become public including a recent case which, according to Sean Cotter of the Boston Herald, cost the city over \$30,000; *and*

WHEREAS: Such fraud points to the need for additional procedural controls and oversight reforms, and the continued lack of a clear plan to achieve the budgeted overtime savings for FY21 may indicate the need for additional civilian administration and finance expertise within the Boston Police Department; *and*

WHEREAS: To implement a full set of measures adequate to hold actual police overtime to the \$48 million budget for FY21, thereby achieving an effective savings of \$24.5 million from FY20, will require continued accountability, monitoring, and collaboration within the BPD, as well as active oversight from the Mayor's Administration and the City Council;
NOW THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss strategies for achieving budget discipline by cutting BPD overtime by at least 20% in FY21, as well as maintaining or increasing this reduction in overtime costs in future fiscal years. This will be the third of quarterly hearings held on the subject in FY21, and representatives from the Boston Police Department, the Mayor's Administration including representatives from the Office of Administration and Finance, persons involved in making similar overtime reforms under the Menino Administration, advocates and experts with programmatic and procedural recommendations for reducing overtime, and members of the public are invited to testify.

Filed on: January 21, 2021