

Offered by Councilors Kenzie Bok and Liz Breadon, Worrell, Murphy, Lara, Arroyo, Flaherty, Louijeune, Fernades-Anderson, Mejia and Flynn



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING A REVIEW OF COVID-19 RECOVERY FUNDS

WHEREAS: In 2021, the City Council took an unprecedented leadership role in the City of Boston's budget process to ensure that the FY22 operating budget not only dedicated \$55 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to offset local revenue declines, but was also accompanied by \$50 million in ARPA funds for various pandemic-related emergency needs and an additional \$31.5 million in ARPA funds appropriated to tackle some of the City's greatest challenges including housing, climate, and the public health crisis at Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard; *and*

WHEREAS: In an effort to mitigate the catastrophic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government passed several impactful relief packages, all of which money must be responsibly appropriated and accounted for; *and*

WHEREAS: The CARES Act of March 2020 was a \$2.2 trillion stimulus from which the City of Boston received over \$181 million, including the Coronavirus Relief Fund, Federal Emergency Management Agency Funds, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund), and other smaller funds, all of which the City acted quickly to utilize in FY20 and FY21 for pandemic response; *and*

WHEREAS: The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of December 2020 was a \$900 billion stimulus from which the City of Boston received over \$150 million, including the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund II) and dedicated funds for Emergency Rental Assistance and Housing; *and*

WHEREAS: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of March 2021 was a \$1.9 trillion stimulus from which the City of Boston expects to receive more than \$800 million over four years, all of which funds must be spent by the end of calendar year 2024; *and*

WHEREAS: The ARPA funds included Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund III), and further funding to be utilized for Emergency Rental Assistance Relief and Housing; *and*

WHEREAS: ARPA requires that cities submit to the U.S. Treasury an interim report, quarterly project and expenditure reports, annual recovery plan performance reports; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Boston launched a community engagement initiative, the Equitable Recovery Coordinating Committee, to oversee the allocation and disbursement of ARPA funds informed by public feedback through the Boston Equitable Recovery Taskforce, and has established a dashboard detailing ARPA funding use; *and*

WHEREAS: In accordance with federal compliance and reporting requirements to support transparency, responsibility, and equity in use of these vital fiscal resources, the City submitted an interim report as well as a Annual Recovery Plan dated August 31, 2021, and is expected to submit quarterly project and expenditure reports and annual performance reports; *and*

WHEREAS: Under ARPA, funding from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program is subject to the requirements specified in the Final Rule released by the U.S. Treasury on January 6, 2022 and taking effect on April 1, 2022, which stipulate provisions to assist recipients and stakeholders and expand eligible uses of SLFRF funds; *and*

WHEREAS: On December 13, 2021, Governor Baker signed Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Needs, approving over \$4 billion in federal coronavirus relief funding and state surplus funds; *and*

WHEREAS: In November 2021, the voters of Boston overwhelmingly approved a binding ballot question concerning a Charter Amendment, affirming that the Mayor and City Council would hold budgetary powers together and granting the Council the ability to amend appropriation orders; *and*

WHEREAS: It is of utmost importance that members of the Boston City Council, residents, and stakeholders are actively engaged in the City's supplemental appropriation processes of state and federal coronavirus relief funds to ensure an equitable and effective recovery in the City of Boston; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the status of state and federal coronavirus fiscal recovery funds and reporting requirements, and that representatives of the mayoral administration including from the Administration and Finance Cabinet, the Equitable Recovery Coordinating Committee, Boston Equitable Recovery Taskforce, and any other interested members of the public be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 20, 2022