



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING ALL CITY OF BOSTON GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING THE URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE GRANT AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT

WHEREAS, In accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §53A, and as incorporated in the City of Boston Charter §51 “Grants and Gifts; Acceptance and Expenditure,” as prepared and distributed by the Boston City Council, July 2007:

“An officer or department of any city or town ... may accept grants or gifts of funds from the federal government and from a charitable foundation, a private corporation, or an individual, or from the commonwealth, a county or municipality or an agency thereof, and ... may expend such funds for the purposes of such grant or gift with the approval of the Mayor and City Council.”;
and

WHEREAS, The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in the City of Boston administers the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, which is awarded annually by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and passed through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security; *and*

WHEREAS, The UASI grant’s priorities are set by DHS, and most recently have included safety and security, critical infrastructure protection, intelligence and information sharing, interoperable communications, CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosion) response, and cyber security; *and*

WHEREAS, While administered through the City of Boston OEM, the UASI grant is regional in nature, addressing the needs and requests of the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR), which includes Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop, in addition to Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, The chief executive of each municipality within the MBHSR appoints a representative to serve as a Jurisdictional Point of Contact (JPOC) on a joint committee which discusses and advocates for which specific programs, personnel, training, and equipment the MBHSR will request be funded by the UASI grant, which DHS then considers when determining the dollar amount and purposes of the UASI grant issued to the MBHSR each year; *and*

WHEREAS, During the spring each year, the Boston Emergency Management Advisory Council (BEMAC) puts forward recommendations to the Boston JPOC for requested priorities for funding by the UASI grant; *and*

WHEREAS, The JPOCs hold a series of public meetings to discuss the priorities of each municipality within the MBHSR, and the region as a whole; *and*

WHEREAS, Around March each year, the JPOCs have typically finished discussing and deciding upon funding priorities, and the MBHSR completes application for the UASI grant to DHS; *and*

WHEREAS, Around May or June each year, the MBHSR is typically informed of which projects DHS has approved for funding through the UASI grant; *and*

WHEREAS, Around December of each year, the City of Boston typically receives the UASI grant, and in compliance with the aforementioned Massachusetts General Law and City of Boston Charter, the Mayor of Boston files a legislative order with the Boston City Council to accept and expend the grant; *and*

WHEREAS, While the UASI grant application is ultimately the purview of the MBHSR and the joint decisions of the JPOCs, this process provides for the opportunity for the Boston City Council to facilitate greater public transparency and community engagement specifically related to proposed projects within the City of Boston by proactively hosting public discussion and soliciting public testimony during the application process for the UASI grant by the MBHSR, rather than waiting until the order to accept and expend the grant is issued by the Mayor of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, In addition to the UASI grant, OEM also administers the Emergency Management Performance Agency grant, an annual non-competitive grant awarded through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency to municipalities in the Commonwealth, with the awarded amounts based on population and intended to provide support for emergency management activities; *and*

WHEREAS, At times, OEM also applies for or administers other grants from the federal or state governments, or other non-governmental entities, including the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness grant in some recent years; *and*

HEREAS, As noted above, in compliance with the aforementioned M.G.L. and City of Boston Charter, upon receipt of a grant or gift to the City of Boston to be administered by OEM, the Mayor of Boston files a legislative order with the Boston City Council to accept and expend or make use of such grant or gift; *and*

WHEREAS, Once filed with the City Council, the City Council President refers such orders to a City Council Committee, which reviews the grant or gift and associated mayoral order, and thereafter provides a recommendation for formal action by the whole City Council body to approve or disapprove of the City of Boston accepting such grant or gift, at which time all Councilors are free to vote on the order at their discretion; *and*

WHEREAS, Due to such orders to accept grants or gifts being filed at the time of receipt by the City of Boston, reviewing these orders solely at the time of filing would provide a haphazard and incomplete picture of funding sources for the programs supported by the grants administered by OEM, as there are a multitude of funding sources even for individual programs, services, teams, equipment purchases, maintenance, and operations, from both various grants and gifts, as well as City funds and other sources; *and*

WHEREAS, By instead conducting its oversight role proactively and with a holistic approach, rather than solely reacting to legislative orders filed by the Mayor upon receipt of grants or gifts, the City Council can better ensure public safety and the effective funding and function of the programs supported by the grants administered by OEM, while providing greater public transparency. ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing regarding all grants administered by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), including the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, and Emergency Management Performance grant. Invitations will include representatives of OEM, representatives of the Boston Emergency Management Advisory Council (BEMAC), the Boston Jurisdictional Point of Contact (JPOC) for the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR), as well as community advocates and experts on public safety, civil liberties, and homeland security. Other interested parties and members of the public are also encouraged to attend and testify.

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