



City of Boston, Massachusetts  
Office of the Mayor  
**MICHELLE WU**

May 18, 2026

## **TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith for your approval an Order authorizing the City of Boston to appropriate the amount of forty-seven million one hundred and twenty thousand two hundred ninety-two dollars (\$47,120,292) for purposes of funding the Snow & Winter Management appropriation to meet operating expenses of the fiscal period commencing July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.

As noted in our March update to the Council, even as revenues have come in at or above target in this current fiscal year, historic snowfall levels in early 2026 resulted in a deficit in the snow removal budget that surpassed what could be managed through standard adjustments. This reflects a broader regional trend; nearly 80 percent of communities in Massachusetts had to secure additional funding to cover snow-related costs exceeding their budgets in FY25. In five of the six fiscal years prior to FY25, the City of Boston underspent our budgeted snow removal line, resulting in surpluses that accumulated in the general fund and contributed to the City's reserve balances. This year's storm activity is precisely the kind of unforeseen, non-recurring cost that reserves exist to address.

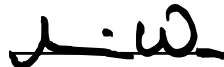
Spending controls, including delayed hiring, for FY26 were first put into place in December 2025 in order to both manage current year uncertainty with the spike in health insurance costs for City employees and prepare for a FY27 budget under continued federal economic stress. In response to the significant snowfall and projected \$48.4 million deficit in March 2026, additional, stricter expenditure controls, including continued delayed hiring and freezes on non-personnel expenditures, were put into place so that the City could minimize any additional deficit. These expenditure controls will remain active through the end of the fiscal year and continue to mitigate overall FY26 costs.



This request is a reflection of responsible fiscal management to close the fiscal year with a balanced budget after careful oversight to mitigate unexpected one-time expenses. Boston's top bond rating with a stable outlook, affirmed by both major rating agencies earlier this month, reflects disciplined financial stewardship, strong reserves, and a consistent commitment to meeting the City's long-term obligations. That standing gives us the flexibility to deploy reserves as intended—to address extraordinary, one-time costs without disrupting the core services our residents rely on. This appropriation is consistent with that approach and leaves the City on solid financial footing.

The expenditures related to this appropriation are considered extraordinary and one-time in nature as non-recurring costs of the City, and therefore, are appropriate to be funded with non-recurring revenue. As such, unrestricted prior-year budgetary fund balance, or free cash, will be used as the source of funding for this request. The City's free cash has been certified by the Director of Accounts at the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and is now available for appropriation. I respectfully request your favorable action on this order.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michelle Wu  
Mayor of Boston

