

Offered by Councilors Kenzie Bok and Andrea Campbell, O'Malley, Flaherty, Mejia, Flynn, Arroyo, Breadon, Essaibi-George, Edwards, Wu and Janey



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING BOSTON POLICE OVERTIME

- WHEREAS:** Black and brown activists nationwide are leading 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:** Municipalities, including the City of Boston, will experience a significant reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health crisis in FY21 and beyond, 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 likely exceeded its FY20 budget allocation by \$8-10 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: To realize such a cut will require a combination of active management reforms, COVID-19 related savings, and procedural changes that reduce the overall overtime hours scheduled; *and*

WHEREAS: Such procedural changes to reduce overtime might include reforms to 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: 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 \$20 million or more from FY20, will require 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 first 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: July 2, 2020