

Offered by Councilors Liz Breadon and Kenzie Bok



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING TARGETED COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT) PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Over one-half of real property in Boston is tax-exempt with some of the largest landholders being charitable educational, medical, and cultural institutions, and while the City and its residents benefit from the presence of these institutions as our neighbors, this benefit is not without its costs; *and*

WHEREAS, Through the City's current payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program adopted in fiscal year 2012, many major institutions help offset the burden their tax-exempt status places on Boston taxpayers by making annual voluntary contributions with cash and in-kind community programs which benefit all Boston residents; *and*

WHEREAS, In its December 2010 Final Report resulting in the current program, the PILOT Task Force established guidelines providing that community benefits should directly benefit all Boston residents, support the City's mission and priorities, emphasize ways in which the City and the institution can collaborate to address shared goals, result in quantifiable services, and that the City must be consistent and transparent in its approach such that institutions may plan accordingly; *and*

WHEREAS, The Task Force identified priorities for how institutions could help meet long-term policy-based goals in areas of need identified by the City, which at the time included closing the achievement gap, reducing violent crime, increasing workforce housing, improving city services, creating new jobs, narrowing health disparities, increasing diversity in government, and growing revenue; *and*

WHEREAS, The City's PILOT program has surpassed its ten year anniversary, yet a common community benefits framework has not been established and, as a result, programmatic investments tend to vary drastically between institutions; *and*

WHEREAS, The Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General in fiscal year 2019 updated guidelines based on the social determinants of health to facilitate a more collaborative and community-driven approach toward coordination of hundreds of millions of dollars in community health programs made by hospitals and health maintenance organizations (HMOs); *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston has identified policy-based topic areas to allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through the year 2026 to drive an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for all Boston residents, and these programmatic areas may help envision how targeted community benefits of PILOT institutions may anchor the lasting health and wellbeing of the City and all of its residents beyond recovery from the pandemic; *and*

WHEREAS, It would be beneficial to the City, all of its residents, participating institutions, and the very communities served for the City to collaboratively engage stakeholders to establish a fair and transparent methodology framework to define consistent, deliverable, and quantifiable community benefits; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss targeted coordination of community benefits in the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program, and that representatives of relevant City departments, participating PILOT institutions, the PILOT Action Group, and members of the public be invited to attend.

Filed on: February 10, 2023