

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS GABRIELA COLETTA ZAPATA, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE,
BRIAN WORRELL, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN,
SANTANA AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING FIRE EMERGENCIES AND THE CREATION OF A FIRE VICTIM FUND

WHEREAS, Boston has experienced a variety of residential fire emergencies that have left residents displaced and in financially precarious situations; *and*

WHEREAS, On July 19th, 2022, a fire occurred at a triple-decker on Princeton Street in East Boston in the midst of some of the highest temperatures on record across the City of Boston. Approximately one hundred and fifty brave firefighters fought the five-alarm fire that burned through all three stories of the building while battling heat exhaustion. The fire displaced twenty-eight people, including eight children – four who are under the age of two, many had no housing after losing all of their belongings, and almost none had renters or homeowners insurance; *and*

WHEREAS, Similarly, on April 2nd, 2024, a six-alarm fire ravaged a home on Meridian Street in East Boston, claiming the lives of a child as well as an adult resident, and displacing thirty people. Last week, East Boston again dealt with another fire on Prescott Street that displaced twenty-seven people. These devastating emergencies have occurred all over the city; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston response from Neighborhood Services, Emergency Management and Medical, Housing Stability, and has been vital in assisting non-English speaking, undocumented, and low-income families on scene; *and*

WHEREAS, Local grassroots organizations often scramble to raise funding for housing and gather clothing donations for displaced residents. However, many still lack adequate housing and instability two months later due to the skyrocketing rate of rental units; *and*

WHEREAS, Historically, our communities have united to implement mutual aid funds benefiting these families in the absence of adequate city resources to help affected residents get back on their feet. However, it is the city's responsibility to address gaps in fire emergency support and response; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston must have a standardized process when individuals are displaced after an emergency like a fire, flood, or building collapse. Additionally, the City should implement a fire victim fund to cover initial housing costs and

basic necessities like food and clothing. The Office of Housing Stability and the Office of Neighborhood Services' emergency response process is in need of assessment to better serve residents impacted by these types of crises; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the coordination of the fire and other emergencies and that the Mayor's Office of Housing, the Office of Housing Stability, Office of Neighborhood Services, Emergency Management, and other relevant departments be invited to testify.

Filed on: January 29, 2025