



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY-ORDERED TOWING PRACTICES IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS*, The Transportation Oversight Division of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) monitors and regulates the rates and practices of common carriers used to transport passengers and property, including trucks, railways, buses, household moving companies, and towing companies; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Pursuant to G.L. c. 159B, § 6B, the Department has jurisdiction over certain tow company charges such as maximum tow rates and fees associated with “involuntary towing” of motor vehicles, which include police-ordered towing, public authority-ordered towing, and trespass towing; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Police or public authority-ordered tows often occur after an accident on a public way, during a snow emergency, street cleaning, or when a stolen vehicle is recovered; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Trespass towing generally refers to a contractual arrangement between a property owner and a licensed tow company to remove unauthorized vehicles, and property owners may hire a company to monitor a property and conduct trespass tows; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The DPU does not have jurisdiction to regulate the terms of the contracts between property owners and tow companies or the rates associated with voluntary tows; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Several departments, including the Boston Transportation, Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments, and individual school sites, separately procure towing services, whether for vehicles in the City fleet, street sweeping enforcement, evidentiary purposes, heavy duty, off-hour emergencies, or for the disposal of motor vehicles declared abandoned; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Parking and towing policies are inconsistent across school facilities, both for faculty and staff during the school day and for neighborhood residents parking after school and overnight, and information about contracted towers are not always posted; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The City of Boston can establish the description of services and specifications for the multi-year contracts awarded to licensed tow operators as qualified vendors conducting public authority-ordered towing; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*
- ORDERED*: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss public authority-ordered towing practices in the City of Boston, and that representatives of City departments, Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG), Statewide Towing Association, consumers, licensed tow operators, and interested members of the public be invited to attend.