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HOUSE . . . . . No. 5585

Substituted by the House, on motion of Mr. Walsh of Peabody, for a bill with the same title (House, No. 4924) [Local Approval Received]. July 16, 2026.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act to amend the operations of the city of Boston Finance Commission to establish the Boston Inspector General Oversight Commission.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 17 to 21, inclusive, of chapter 468 of the acts of 1909 are hereby repealed.

SECTION 2. The charter of the city of Boston, which is on file in the office of the archivist of the commonwealth, as provided in section 12 of chapter 43B of the General Laws, is hereby amended by striking out sections 43 to 47, inclusive and inserting in place thereof the following sections:

Section 43. Appointment of the Boston Inspector General Oversight Commission. In the City of Boston there shall be a Commission consisting of 5 persons, inhabitants of and qualified voters in the City of Boston, who shall have been such for at least 3 years prior to the date of their appointment. Members shall serve without compensation and be individuals with experience or expertise in investigations, auditing, administrative law, accounting, performance measurements, public policy, community engagement or other relevant expertise. Members shall

be appointed by the Governor, with one member appointed for the term of 5 years, one member for 4 years, one member for 3 years, one member for 2 years and one member for 1 year, and thereafter as the terms of office expire in each year one member for a term of 5 years. Vacancies in the Commission shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Governor. The members of said commission may be removed by the Governor for cause. Such cause may include substantial neglect of duty, gross misconduct or conviction of a crime. The reasons for removal of a commission member shall be stated in writing and shall include the basis for such removal. Such writing shall be sent to the clerk of the City of Boston, the Boston City Council and the Mayor at the time of the removal and shall be deemed to be a public document.

Section 44. Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall appoint an Inspector General following a majority vote of its members. The appointed Inspector General shall serve for a term of five years. The person so appointed shall be selected without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, investigation or criminal justice administration.

In case of a vacancy in the position of Inspector General, their successor shall be appointed in the same manner for the unexpired term. No person shall be appointed for more than two five-year terms.

The person so appointed may be removed from office, for cause, by a majority vote of the Commission. Such cause may include substantial neglect of duty, gross misconduct or conviction of a crime. The reasons for removal of the inspector general shall be stated in writing and shall include the basis for such removal. Such writing shall be sent to the clerk of the City of Boston,

the Boston City Council and the Mayor at the time of the removal and shall be deemed to be a public document. The Commission shall annually set the salary of the Inspector General. The Inspector General shall hold or obtain a nationally recognized certification as a Certified Inspector General within one (1) year of their hiring date.

Additional duties of the Commission may include supporting the Inspector General in conducting investigations, including but not limited to collecting data, conducting interviews, writing and reviewing reports; monitoring the implementation of recommendations and providing feedback to the Inspector General; conduct a performance review of the Inspector General every 2 years; coming before the City Council upon request; and review, amend and approve the annual budget proposed by the Inspector General.

No member of the Commission shall hold, or be a candidate for, any elected public office while an officer or employee, or for three years thereafter, nor shall they hold office in any political party or political committee, or participate in any political campaign of any candidate for public office while an officer or employee.

Section 45. Duties of the Inspector General. The Inspector General shall have the authority to investigate any and all business of the City of Boston, including but not limited to: conduct investigations on all matters related to the finances of the City or the county of Suffolk, including appropriations, debt, loans, taxation, expenditures, bookkeeping and administration, particularly concerning fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement that require examination to ensure transparency, efficiency, accountability, responsibility, integrity and compliance with applicable laws; as well as to review the policies, practices and procedures related to these matters to identify areas for improvement. Whenever any pay roll, bill or other claim against the city is

presented to the mayor, city auditor or the city treasurer, they shall, if the same seems to them to be of doubtful validity, excessive in amount or otherwise contrary to the city's interest, refer it to the Commission, which shall immediately investigate the facts and report thereon; and pending said report payment shall be withheld.

The Inspector General shall foster investigative, educational, auditing, evaluative, preventative and contract monitoring procedures to improve the delivery of City services, strengthen accountability, and enhance operational effectiveness, all while adhering to professional standards for Offices of Inspector General. To facilitate its work, the Inspector General shall engage directly with constituents as necessary to gather information for investigations, reviews or recommendations and shall take appropriate steps to build public awareness of its purpose, processes and procedures for receiving complaints.

The Inspector General shall have the authority to initiate investigations based on complaints from the Mayor, City Council, City vendors, grant recipients, employees of the City or agencies thereof, contracted personnel, residents, and business owners or, at its discretion, to address inefficiencies, waste, misconduct, abuse, or mismanagement in City operations, services and programs. The Inspector General shall have the power to issue subpoenas. When the Inspector General has reason to believe they must recuse themselves from a matter, the Inspector General shall refer such matter to the appropriate investigatory or law enforcement agency.

The Inspector General shall prepare and publish an annual report of the Commission and file it with the City Clerk and the Governor. The annual report may include recommendations regarding program weakness, contracting irregularities or other institutional problems discovered by the Inspector General. The annual report shall be made available publicly online by March 1st

of each year. The Inspector General shall appear in front of the City Council annually and upon request.

Section 46. Powers of the Commission and Enforcement. For the purpose of enabling the said commission to perform the duties and carry out the objects herein contemplated by this act, the Commission, by and through the Inspector General, is hereby empowered to inspect all City records and inquire into the management of the business of said City, and to inform itself as to the manner and methods in which the same is or has been conducted and is further authorized to summon witnesses pursuant to section 8 of chapter 233 of the General Laws.

Subject to any applicable law, auditing, investigative and evaluative files of the Commission containing privileged or legally protected information shall be confidential and shall not be divulged to any person or agency except to the United States Attorney, the Massachusetts Attorney General, or Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, State Inspector General, or as otherwise required by law. The Commission shall implement internal safeguards to restrict access to ensure confidentiality and limit confidential auditing, investigative and evaluative files to authorized personnel only. Subject to Public Records law, names and identities of individuals making complaints and information protected under law will not be disclosed without the individual's written consent unless required by law or judicial processes.

No person employed by, under contract to, or any agent of the City of Boston shall either directly or indirectly, take or threaten to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personal action against any individual or employee as reprisal for making a complaint, testifying before or disclosing information to the Commission and their staff. Upon notification of such a claim, the Inspector General may conduct an investigation in accordance with this act.

The Mayor, the City Council, the Commission and any governmental or quasi-governmental entity head shall not prevent, impair or prohibit the Inspector General from initiating, carrying out, or completing any audit, investigation, review or evaluation. Any covered entity that willfully and without justification or excuses obstructs an investigation of the Inspector General by withholding documents or testimony is subject to forfeiture of office, discipline, debarment or any other applicable penalty.

Anyone who knows of or receives a complaint regarding misconduct, malfeasance, misfeasance, conflicts of interest, acceptance of bribes or gratuities, fraud, waste or abuse of office should immediately report all relevant information or refer such complaint to the Commission. It should be the duty of every covered entity to cooperate with the Inspector General in any investigation pursuant to this Chapter, including the prompt provision to the Inspector General any information, document, report, record, account or other material requested by the Inspector General in connection with an investigation, audit, review or evaluation.

The Inspector General may not hold any elected City office until two (2) years after leaving the position and may not have worked as a City of Boston employee, with an exception made for the existing Executive Director of the Finance Commission, or for a Boston elected official within two (2) years of appointment. During their term, the Inspector General may not engage in an occupation for profit, except for teaching, subject to the approval of the Commission, or hold any other government office outside the duties of the Inspector General. The Inspector General shall not solicit votes or raise monetary or in-kind contributions for any candidate for an elective office. All employees of the commission are subject to M.G.L. 268A.

Section 47. Appropriation for the Support of the Commission. The City shall annually appropriate an amount of money sufficient for the support of the operation and administration of the Commission; provided, however, that said city shall not be required to provide more money for the support of the Commission than is appropriated. The Inspector General shall present their recommended budget to the Commission and place it on record with the City Clerk by 1st Wednesday in February prior to the beginning of such fiscal year to be presented by the Mayor with the annual operating budget. In acting on appropriations for Commission costs, the Mayor and city council shall approve the total amount of the appropriations requested by the Commission, and may increase the total requested amount but neither the mayor nor the city council shall allocate appropriations among accounts or place any restriction on such appropriations. Each fiscal year appropriation shall be no less than previous year unless recommended by either the Inspector General or the Commission votes to accept lower funding.

The appropriation of said city shall establish the total appropriation for the support of the Commission, but may not limit the authority of the Commission to determine expenditures within the total appropriation; provided, however, that if the city auditor determines that Commission expenditures in any fiscal year are projected to be in excess of total budgeted expenditures for that fiscal year, as supported by appropriation and other available funding, then the Commission shall not reallocate or transfer funds from any item in the budget for that fiscal year to fund any such projected additional expenditures.

The Inspector General shall not approve the appointment of any person except to a budgeted position. The Inspector General, with the advice and consent of the Commission may apply for and receive state and federal funds in order to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the office.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect 120 days after its passage.