

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

- Bill #:** H.4924
- Title:** An Act to amend the operations of the city of Boston Finance Commission to establish the Boston Inspector General Oversight Commission
- Sponsor:** Rep. Christopher Worrell
- Committee:** Municipalities and Regional Government
- Hearing Date:** March 3, 2026
- Similar Matter:** S.2956 (Sen. Liz Miranda) is identical.
- Current Law:** Chapter 486 of the Acts of 1909, An Act relating to the administration of the city of Boston and to amend the charter of the said city, authorized the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Governor's Council, to appoint a five-member Finance Commission. The purpose of the Finance Commission is to investigate all financial matters relating to the city of Boston and to report on such activities to the mayor, city council, Governor and the Legislature.
- Chapter 740 of 1964, Section 3 repealed a provision of state law that previously required the advice and consent of the Governor's Council for ordinary (non-judicial) executive department appointments.
- MGL Chapter 233, Section 8 authorizes certain governmental bodies to summon witnesses and compel the production of books and papers, and for them to be summoned in the same manner as would be done for civil cases before the courts.
- Summary:** Section 1 of the bill would replace section 17 of the 1909 special act with new and updated language. The Finance Commission would still consist of five members, serving staggered terms of five years each, to be appointed by the Governor. Members must have been residents and registered voters of the city of Boston for at least three years. The language removes references to a chairman being compensated; other members would still serve without compensation and removes references to such appointments requiring the advice and consent of the Governor's Council. Members may be removed by the Governor for cause, provided the reasons are stated in writing and sent to the city clerk, city council and mayor. The letter would be a public document.
- Section 2 replaces section 18 of the special act, which lists the duties of the commission and includes reporting requirements. The new language provides for the appointment by majority vote of the Finance Commission of a city Inspector General, who shall serve a five-year term and be compensated. The bill lists the desired skills, experience and qualifications, limits the time in office to no more than two five-year terms, and provides a method for filling a

vacancy in the position. The person so appointed would need to obtain national certification as a certified inspector general within one year of being hired. The person appointed to the position could be removed for cause by majority vote of the commission. Such a letter would be a public document.

Additional duties of Finance Commission:

- Assist Inspector General in conducting investigations;
- Monitor implementation of recommendations and provide feedback to the Inspector General;
- Conduct performance review of Inspector General every 2 years;
- Respond to city council inquiries; and
- Review, amend and approve Inspector General's annual budget.

This section contains a provision prohibiting members of the commission from holding or seeking elected office while serving as an officer or employee, or for 3 years afterward. It also prohibits members from holding office in a political party or political committee or participating in any candidate's political campaign.

Section 3 amends the 1909 special act by deleting section 19, which provides that questions about the validity of certain public debts and payroll accounts be referred to the Finance Commission. The language would be replaced with a provision which lists the duties of the Inspector General's position, which would include but not be limited to:

- Conduct investigations on all matters related to finances and administration of the city of Boston or Suffolk County;
- Foster investigative, educational, auditing, evaluative, preventative, and contract monitoring procedures to improve the delivery of city services, strengthen accountability, and enhance operational effectiveness;
- Initiate investigations based upon complaints from the mayor, city council, city vendors, grant recipients, employees of the city or its agencies, contracted personnel, residents, business owners, etc.
- Have the power to issue subpoenas.
- If the Inspector General has reason to believe that they must recuse themselves from a matter, they shall refer such matter to the appropriate investigatory or law enforcement agency.
- Prepare and publish an annual report of the Finance Commission and file it with the city clerk and Governor, such report to be made publicly available by March 1st of each year.
- Appear before the city council at least once a year and upon request.

Section 4 replaces section 21 of the 1909 special act with new and updated language concerning the powers of the commission and enforcement provisions. Among the provisions are:

- Authorizes the commission, by and through the Inspector General, to inspect all city records and inquire into the management of the business of the city, as well as summon witnesses as provided by law;
- Provides for safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of witnesses and information obtained by the commission;
- Prohibits a person employed by the city, or an agent or contractor from taking personal action against anyone who files a complaint or testifies before the commission and their staff;
- Prohibits the mayor, city council, commission, or any other governmental or quasi-governmental entity from interfering with the Inspector General's duties, and prescribes penalties for doing so;
- Encourages anyone who knows of or receives a complaint about improper activities to report such information or refer such complaints to the commission for further review;
- Prohibits the Inspector General from holding any elected city office for 2 years after leaving the position and contains additional limitations on outside activities.
- All employees of the commission would be subject to the state ethics law, MGL Chapter 268A.

Section 5 of the bill inserts a new section into the 1909 special act to require that the city annually appropriate enough money to support the commission's operation and administration. and includes the budget process and certain other related fiscal procedures.

Section 6 is a severability clause, stating that if any portion of the act is found to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the remaining provisions would remain in effect.

Section 7 provides for the act to take effect 120 days after passage.

Notes: Approved by the Boston City Council at an October 29, 2025 by a vote of 10 yes and 2 no; approved by the Mayor.