



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

## Guide to the Fire Department records

### Mayor's approvals

Finding aid prepared by Gretchen Carney

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b>     | City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division |
| <b>Title:</b>          | Mayor's approvals                                       |
| <b>Collection No.:</b> | 0500.012  |
| <b>Dates:</b>          | 1901-1994 with gaps                                     |
| <b>Quantity:</b>       | 18.0 Cubic feet   |

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### Historical note

The origins of the Boston Fire Department date back to 1678 with the establishment of the first engine company and the receipt of the first hand fire engine in North America. The Board of Fire Wards was established on February 1, 1711. Prominent men were chosen as Fire Wards and were responsible for the operation and maintenance of the equipment assigned to their ward. Chapter 52 of the Acts of 1825, "An Act Establishing a Fire Department in the City of Boston and an Ordinance for the preventing and extinguishing of fires and establishing a fire department" went into full operation in April of 1826. With this legislation, the Board of Fire Wards was dissolved. All records and property belonging to the city were transferred to the Chief Engineer in May of 1826.

By the reorganization in 1837, the Fire Department changed from a partially volunteer to a paid fire department.

On June 16, 1851, the City Council passed an order to erect a system of telegraphic fire alarms and the first regular alarm on the new system was received on April 29, 1852. On January 1, 1859, two new steam engines were put in service replacing two hand engines. On October 24, 1873, the City Council passed an ordinance creating a Board of Fire Commissioners to oversee the department. Section 9 of Chapter 449 of the Acts of 1895, an act to amend the City Charter, abolished the Board of Fire Commissioners and placed the Department under the charge of one Fire Commissioner. The Chief Engineer serves as the Executive Officer of the Commissioner and directs the work of the members of the Department.

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## Scope and Contents note

This series consists of chronological bound volumes of letters (letters were later replaced by standardized forms) written by the City of Boston Fire Commissioner to the Mayor requesting approval for myriad personnel and financial matters. Approval requests regarding personnel matters include those for new hires, retirements, salary/wage increases, reinstatements, pension enrollments for windows, and pension allotments for those who were injured on the job. Some requests for vacation time for the various Commissioners are also included. Approval requests regarding financial matters consist mainly of the purchase and/or sale of equipment, including horses, wagons and harnesses, cars, trucks and hoses. Contract bids for equipment purchases and construction projects, as well as requests for permission to waive the bidding process are included. The series dates from 1901-1994 with gaps. The volumes for 1915 and 1916 are missing.

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## Administrative Information

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The Mayor's approvals were transferred from the Boston Fire Department to the City of Boston Archives on March 14, 2012.

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### Series I: Mayor's approvals

#### Box

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|----|---|
| 1  | 1901 May 25-1910 December 9                           |
| 2  | 1913 March 14-1914 December, 1917 January-1920 June 1 |
| 3  | 1920 June 3-1922 August 23                            |
| 4  | 1927 January 8-1936 June 11                           |
| 5  | 1936 June 15-1938 December 31                         |
| 6  | 1942 June 22-1944 October 19                          |
| 7  | 1944 October 19-1947 January 28                       |
| 8  | 1947 January 1-1950 July 15                           |
| 9  | 1950 July 5-1954 May 17                               |
| 10 | 1954 May 17-1956 December 26                          |
| 11 | 1956 December 26-1959 July 21                         |

|    |                                   |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 12 | 1959 July 21-1961 December 20     |
| 13 | 1961 December 21-1967 August 24   |
| 14 | 1967 August 29-1973 August 31     |
| 15 | 1973 September 1-1977 November 30 |
| 16 | 1977 December 1-1982 January 7    |
| 17 | 1982 January 6-1989 May 24        |
| 18 | 1988 May 20-1994 January 12       |

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