

“This Isn’t a Job, It’s a Calling”: Mayor Wu Celebrates Boston’s Newest EMTs

By Hannah Portman

Mayor Michelle Wu stood before the Boston EMS Academy graduates and individuals being promoted at the

Boston Public Library’s Rabb Hall today, where she celebrated and praised them for embodying a spirit of selflessness that keeps the city safe every day.

“Today we’re celebrating more than singular acts of courage, we’re celebrating a group of people ... who have dedicated their lives to putting others before themselves,” Wu said.

The Class of 2024-2 and those being promoted gathered in the hall with friends and family to celebrate the end of their time at the academy, and the presentation of their EMT badges.

The crowd of about 250 people was made up of friends and family members, 13 individuals being promoted, and not quite a sea, but a large pond of 35 graduates marked by their beige uniforms and distinct City of Boston EMS patches on either arm.

In her keynote speech, Wu remarked on the Boston Marathon this past weekend, and thanked the EMTs for their courage and dedication to keeping the city safe during its most important weekend of the year.

“Because you [all] were there, spectators from across the city, our commonwealth and all over the world were able to lose themselves in the magic of the moment,” she said.

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Along with Wu, those being honored heard remarks from others involved in the Boston EMS program, including James Hooley, the chief of the EMS Department.

“Becoming an EMT or a paramedic is the most honorable call, but it’s not an easy one. It requires courage, resilience, discipline and every shift you will have the chance to change someone’s life,” Hooley told the graduates. “Our work is vital. You are essential.”

Wu also told the crowd that her administration has been, and is continuing to invest in Boston EMS to ensure they have the resources they need to take care of the people of Boston.

“We know that an investment in the safety of our community is an investment in the health, success and prosperity of our city,” she said.

Nick Kania, 25, a graduating EMT recruit from the South Shore of Massachusetts, said he felt pride in his achievement and appreciated the ceremony and Wu’s speech.

“Seeing the mayor was awesome. I’m really glad she came out, I felt very personally seen by her speech, and it’s important work that we do so I’m glad that it was recognized,” Kania said.

As the ceremony came to an end, Boston EMS Superintendent Leonard Shubitowski spoke into his radio to officially log-on the class of 2024-2, and the crowd – along with Wu – erupted into emotion, cheers, and applause.

“What you do is a gift and a sacrifice. It’s shouldering the burden of preparation, training and care so others don’t have to worry,” Wu said. “This isn’t a job, it’s a calling.”