

Town of Brookline Advisory Committee

Public Safety Subcommittee Report

FY22 Police Department Budget

The Public Safety Subcommittee held a virtual public hearing on Wednesday March 3, 2021 at 5:30 PM to review the FY22 Police Department Budget. In attendance were Subcommittee members Janice Kahn (Chair), Alisa Jonas, David-Marc Goldstein, Susan Granoff and Neil Gordon. Also attending were: Acting Police Chief Mark Morgan, Kevin Mascoll (Public Safety Business Manager), Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis, Casey Hatchett (BPD), David Pilgrim (BPD), Jennifer Paster (BPD), Town Counsel Joslin Murphy, SB Member Raul Fernandez, SB Member Bernard Greene, Marty Rosenthal (TMM P9), Carla Benka (AC), Chi Chi Wu (AC), Michael Zoorob, Carol Caro, Mike Toffel (TMM P8), Mark Gray (TMM P7), Paul Harris (TMM P9), Lynda Roseman (TMM P14) and Susan Cohen (TMM P7).

Budget Summary:

The FY22 request for the Brookline Police Department (BPD) budget is \$17,493,030 which is a reduction of \$246,716 or 1.39%* from FY21. The reduction in the budget is primarily due to two factors: the removal of \$188,196 of HCA funds from the Police Department, and a reduction of the Quinn Education Incentive of \$108,970, due primarily to retirements. Host Community Agreement (HCA) fund reductions are: \$80,196 from Overtime; 1 bike unit officer (\$66,000); uniforms (\$25,000) and training (\$17,000). Services remain level-funded. Utilities are down \$7,609 (2.61%) due to decreases in electricity (\$20,901) and diesel (\$270), and generator fuel (\$150) offsetting increases in gasoline (\$12,790) and natural gas (\$738). Budgeted capital is level-funded at \$396,169 and includes funding for 5 vehicles (\$300,122).

- FY22 Budget of the BPD (\$17,493,030) is 7.33% less than the PD's FY19 Actual Expenses of \$18,877,075 and (\$1.38M less), and represents 5.3% of the Town's General Fund.
- The amount budgeted for the Dispatch Division (\$1,068,000) includes an increase of \$71,901. The Dispatch Center, which handles all of the emergency calls including fire and medical, accounts for over 6% of the BPD budget.
- Once the HCA stabilization fund is appropriated, additional funds will be added to the BPD budget.

Unfunded Expenses include:

- Funding for the implementation of body cameras. The BPD has received quotes ranging from \$550K to over \$1M for the hardware and software. In addition, personnel hours will be needed to compile, store and property safeguard the footage and respond to Public Records request for footage.
- Any increased costs resulting from collective bargaining agreements (the most recent contract ended in June 2020).

*Note that the % variance 2021-22 in the budget book and online was incorrect last year and is wrong this year as well. The correct variance in the last column should read: Salaries -1.21%; Supplies -16.91%; Other 37.53%; Utilities - 2.55% and Total -1.39%

Expand All	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	2021-22 Variance	2021-22 Variance
▶ SALARIES	\$ 15,843,949	\$ 16,334,887	\$ 16,137,779	-197,108	-1.22%
▶ SERVICES	726,478	516,731	516,731	0	0.00%
▶ SUPPLIES	262,558	147,857	122,857	-25,000	-20.35%
▶ OTHER	97,199	45,300	28,300	-17,000	-60.07%
▶ UTILITIES	250,513	298,802	291,193	-7,609	-2.61%
▶ BUDGETED CAPITAL	562,286	396,169	396,169	0	0.00%
Total	\$ 17,742,983	\$ 17,739,746	\$ 17,493,030	-246,716	-1.41%

Discussion:

Acting Chief Mark Morgan narrated a slide presentation detailing the work of the BPD during FY21. A copy of that presentation is a separate attachment to this report, as is a copy of the 2020 Year End Report, which compiles crime statistics and includes data on arrests, field interrogations and moving violations aggregated by demographics on an annual basis.

Crime Statistics: In 2020 Part A crimes (murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft) increased 28%, going from 608 in 2019 to 778 reported incidents. An increase in larcenies from 440 to 583 was the largest component of the total increase and included an uptick in shoplifting, which may be an indicator of deteriorating economic circumstances for many people as a result of COVID-19. Many of the larcenies were from storage units and of bicycles and packages delivered to residents' homes. The number of burglaries did not increase since people tended to be in their homes. Assaults increased from 103 to 120, largely as a result of an increase in domestic violence, likely also arising from the stressors of COVID-19.

Notable was a drop in the number of dispatch center calls for service from 78,288 in 2019 to 63,806 in 2020. The number of field investigations remained the same at 36, while the number of arrests declined from 343 in 2019 to 206 in 2020.

There were 2 citizen complaints about alleged police misconduct filed last year, compared with 8 in 2019 and 2 in 2018.

Personnel: The Department is budgeted for 135 sworn officers, which is down 4 positions from several years ago. Currently there are 126 officers and 9 vacancies. In addition, 3 officers have successfully applied for lateral transfers to the Everett, Boston and Weymouth police departments and another 2 officers have filed applications for lateral transfers to the Boston PD and the State police and are awaiting approval, which will create more vacancies. There have been 0 lateral transfers into the BPD during this time. The Civil Service exam will be held in June. For those who pass the exam and apply to work in Brookline, they will still need to go through psychological and other evaluations, then training in the Police Academy, additional training in the BPD (100% of BPD officers are CIT-trained), after which they have a 12-month probationary period.

The BPD has for many years been actively seeking to increase diversity among officers in the Department. Acting Chief Morgan shared the following data: Approximately 34% of the officers are minorities (officers of color and female officers). The breakdown is: Asian [11 male; 0 female]; Black [7 male, 1 female]; Latinx [10 male, 1 female; White 83 male, 13 female].

Approximately 10-15 officers contracted COVID. 80% of officers are now vaccinated, which is voluntary, not mandatory for police or fire. Officers were unable to take vacation and away days off during the prior year with COVID-related demands on staffing, and several officers have newborn babies which added further stressors for these officers due to COVID. As a consequence, it is expected that many officers will be requesting time off in the coming year, once COVID is under control. This, combined with the number of departing officers from the Department, will result in budgetary and staffing pressures in the upcoming year.

Further exacerbating these pressures in FY22 is that there will be 2 Boston Marathons (Fall and Spring) and the U.S. Open, which will require additional staffing, as will the extra responsibilities of integrating new policies and regulations stemming both from the State's recently-passed Police Reform bill and any changes coming from the two Town committees that are evaluating police procedures and practices. In addition, the State's Police Reform bill mandates additional training for officers, which will take time away from work.

There was a discussion of whether cutting the three officers in the Walk & Talk program, which is being proposed by the Re-Imagine Task Force, would help resolve BPD personnel shortfalls by moving those officers to other units. A member of the public spoke in support of maintaining this component of community policing as a positive approach to policing that makes the police more accessible to residents. Acting Chief Morgan, following up on those comments, noted that these officers, who have been specifically selected for these roles based on their skills and personalities, are the only ones assigned to work with youth outside of school time, and that many families seek out the officers to help them when their children are in trouble.

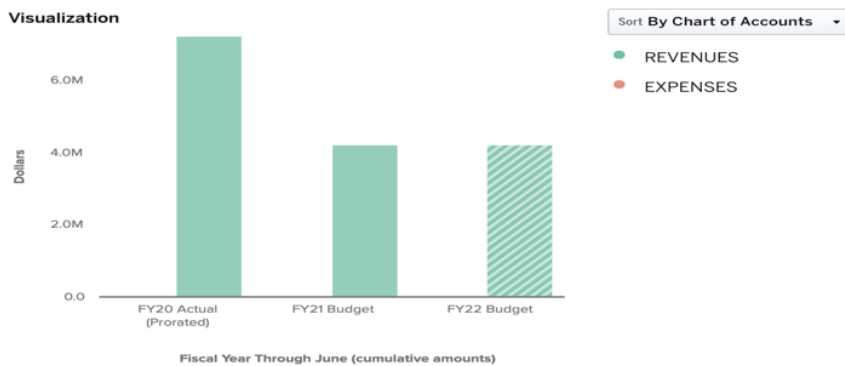
Update on the Public Safety Dispatch Division: Last year only 10 of 15 positions in the Dispatch Center were filled, there was no head dispatcher, forced overtime was the norm and morale was low. The Dispatch Center has now filled all 15 positions, as well as the Head Dispatcher position and morale is good. In addition, in FY 22 a new dispatch position, a floating dispatcher to fill in for absences, has been added, bringing the total to 16.

Salaries and Retention/Recruitment: A member of the public expressed concern about the Town’s difficulty in retaining personnel in the Department. Acting Chief Morgan noted the low morale of officers nationwide and in the Department, an issue that has been discussed for several years during subcommittee hearings and that has increased this year. These conditions have resulted in increasingly greater difficulties recruiting new officers. The Town has also not been able to benefit from lateral transfers, since officers from other municipalities are not applying for positions in Brookline.

The issue of salaries was discussed. Assistant Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis, who had worked in Cambridge prior to coming from Brookline, was asked about that City’s pay scale compared to Brookline’s. While observing that Cambridge is unlike other municipalities, he noted that the starting salary in Cambridge is about \$10,000 higher than in Brookline. Patrol officers in Brookline on Step 1 have a base salary of \$56,547; Step 4 (top step) is \$66,308. Cambridge police officers also receive about \$5,000-\$10,000 more in benefits, including the Quinn educational incentive, which Brookline has replaced with a less favorable educational incentive for newer recruits. It would be instructive to have more data on salaries and benefit packages for other communities to better determine the extent to which this can explain the Town’s difficulty in recruiting and retaining personnel, or whether other factors play a more important role.

Noted at the hearing was the fact that this salary data doesn’t match the public perception that Brookline pays its officers among the highest salaries in the Town when local newspapers publish salary data. Two factors contribute to the higher salaries of some police officers: overtime, which the Town does pay; and details, which are paid by private companies who need to hire an officer when doing construction or utility work in Brookline. For FY21 there was also retroactive pay resulting from the last contract settlement. The reason that detail pay shows up in the salaries of individual officers is that those contractors pay for work details through the Town’s MUNIS payroll system. Additionally, the Town (like other municipalities who provide details) receives 10% of each detail payment which goes into the General Fund to support all Town services.

While not considered as part of the BPD budget, it is interesting to note the nearly \$3M drop in revenues to the General Fund generated primarily by parking meter and other fees, due to the anticipated impact of COVID-19.



Data

Expand All	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	2021-22 Variance	2021-22 Variance
► REVENUES	\$ 7,236,338	\$ 4,245,000	\$ 4,245,000	0	0.00%
Revenues Less Expenses	\$ 7,236,338	\$ 4,245,000	\$ 4,245,000	0	0.00%

The Public Safety Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0-0 recommends an appropriation of \$17,493,030 for the FY22 Police Department budget.