

## FY22 Building Department Operating Budget

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Capital Subcommittee Public Hearing

March 4 and 12, 2021

The Capital Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met at 5pm via Zoom on March 4<sup>th</sup> and again at 10:45am via Zoom on March 12<sup>th</sup>. In attendance at the first meeting were subcommittee chair, Carla Benka; sub-committee members Amy Hummel, Harry Friedman, Pamela Lodish, Carol Levin, and John Doggett; Advisory Committee Members Cliff Brown and Janice Kahn were also present, as was Fred Levitan; Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Charlie Simmons, Director of Public Buildings; Dan Bennett, Building Commissioner; and Director of Operations for the School Department, Matthew Gills were all in attendance at the first meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

At the continued meeting the full subcommittee was present, absent P. Lodish; Cliff Brown and Fred Levitan were in attendance on the 12<sup>th</sup> as were prior listed Town employees (excluding Director of Operations for the school department), and all were joined by Deputy Superintendent of Administration and Finance, Mary Ellen Normen; and Helen Charlupski, chair of the capital subcommittee of the School Committee.

### **The Building Department Budget Statement**

The Building Department has six subprograms are administration, code enforcement and inspection, repairs to public buildings, Town Hall maintenance, construction/renovation and the school plant.

The Building Department Operating budget request in the reflected in the budget book on page IV-57 is **\$9,116,024** for **FY22**.

Expand All	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	2021-22 Variance	2021-22 Variance
▶ SALARIES	\$ 2,510,819	\$ 2,886,060	\$ 2,930,001	43,941	1.50%
▶ SERVICES	3,242,631	3,199,159	3,274,571	75,412	2.30%
▶ SUPPLIES	24,750	24,575	24,575	0	0.00%
▶ OTHER	12,447	5,248	5,248	0	0.00%
▶ UTILITIES	2,299,281	2,729,946	2,825,759	95,813	3.39%
▶ BUDGETED CAPITAL	68,365	55,870	55,870	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,158,293</b>	<b>\$ 8,900,858</b>	<b>\$ 9,116,024</b>	<b>215,167</b>	<b>2.36%</b>

NB: A live link to the detailed budget is included ([here](#)), and in the title of this document. In addition, drafts of the 2022 Schools Mini CIP, 5 year plan and Schools R&M draft are attached.

## Overview and Primary Take-Away

**The FY22 building department budget reflects a \$215,167 (2.36%) increase.**

As reflected in the table above, the increases include:

- Personnel increases of \$43,941 (1.5%);
- Services increase of \$75,421 (2.3%)
- Utilities increase of \$95,813 (3.39%)
- Capital, Supplies and “Other” are level funded.

As with all proposed FY22 budgets, this is a Covid recovery budget. Last year, the Building Department had its repair and maintenance (R&M) budget cut by \$110,000, as well as the reduction of one of the greatly needed inspector positions that had just been added to the department. While the inspector position has been added back into the FY22 budget, the \$110,000 for R&M has not. Currently, there is an approximate \$200,000 deficit for R&M in this years budget, and a **deficit** approximately \$272,000 for staffing required to properly maintain the school plant.

The most pressing issue facing the building department this year continues to be **lack of sufficient funds to properly repair and maintain Town buildings**. In 2017, the Advisory Committee were provided spreadsheets indicating that the building department ideally needed \$15,000,000 to address long deferred repair and maintenance needs; two years later, the FY19 report to the Advisory Committee noted that the catch-up R&M budget was an estimated \$16,700,000. The R&M budget continues to fall short of addressing documented R&M needs.

That is not to say that the Building Department has not done an excellent job with the resources it has, but as has been reported to the Advisory Committee for the last several years, the building department often finds itself in reactive, rather than proactive repair and maintenance mode. Despite strategically prioritizing R&M, as the Town continues to expand school buildings, as HVAC systems become increasingly more complicated and as electrical systems proliferate and become more complicated as well, the dollars needed to repair and maintain these Town assets is increasingly strained.

The subcommittee recognizes that continued deferred maintenance of the Town’s building investments and assets leads to higher costs, more extensive repairs, and premature replacement needs.

### Brookline School Buildings

**Underfunding for R&M of the School plant is of great concern.** Exacerbating that concern is the High School addition and rebuild soon to come online, and the Driscoll and Pierce projects in the pipeline.

As we know, the **School Committee** has put forth one proposed budget requiring approximately \$5,000,000 more than was allotted, reflecting the Schools **on-going struggle with structural deficits** (which of course is a shared concern for the Town). It's worth noting that the additional amount the School Department is asking for does include the expansion request from the building department; however, there are items totaling \$5,359,925 in the 2021 Mini-CIP for high school, which are not included in the School Committee's budget.

The amount of funding the Town (and the Schools) will receive thanks to the recently passed American Rescue Act is unknown, as is how the Town will parcel out those funds.

### Discussion

The committee discussed the fact that while debt exclusion overrides anticipate building costs, they have not sufficiently addressed the additional costs for R&M that follow (there is likely some bias that because a building is new, not much needs to be done). Part and parcel of this issue is that with larger buildings also comes the need for additional staff and supplies; and, because they are obvious and immediate needs, those operating costs are prioritized. There was general agreement among committee members that Brookline ought to better plan and properly care for these substantial tax-payer investments, in addition to taking better care of what we already have.

One subcommittee member **suggested** that perhaps the Town ought to **devise a new or different approach for calculating the costs of a new building** which anticipates operating costs. For example, when putting forward a debt exclusion override, a simultaneous override to cover operating costs would help address the issue and lead to greater transparency. Another suggestion was to use the data we have to **benchmark** the cost of our school buildings on per square foot basis, and with similar communities. Additionally, it would be helpful to separate the inflation in certain types of costs from R&M, from costs related to expansion, in order to provide an accurate view of expenses/costs so that the Town may plan accordingly.

The subcommittee has asked for an updated copy of the Public Building Director's ideal budget, and prioritization list.

### **Planning and Staffing Updates**

As noted in the overview, last year the Building Department had a recently added inspector position removed in order to trim costs in the Town's Covid budget. That position has been added back to the FY22 budget.

Additionally, the Building Department continues its efforts to hire additional tradesmen, as recommended by the Matrix Report, in the Public Buildings Division.

**The Matrix Report**, a one-time, external report completed in July 2016, provided the Town with a comprehensive evaluation and recommendations for Brookline’s building program. The Advisory committee has heard the recommendations included in the Matrix Report during the last several budget cycles. While the **Building Department continues to rely on the report for guidance**, the aforementioned addition of square-footage in school buildings suggests that the Matrix Report **may no longer adequately address Brookline’s public building constellation**.

As has been reported in the past, the Matrix report opined on the efficiencies of employing in-house Tradesmen who are familiar with Town equipment and operating procedures, rather than an Open Contractor Model (OCM). In-house employees are available when needed, compared to hiring outside Tradesmen at a premium, who may or may not be available or have experience with a particular piece of equipment.

There are currently 4 HVAC positions open. While the Town has occasionally been able to hire HVAC tradesmen, they remain difficult positions to fill. Retention is also a problem given the lucrative private options available to these tradesmen in the current economic environment. Even other towns within the Commonwealth offer more attractive pay.

### Utilities

	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	2021-22 Variance	2021-22 Variance
▼ UTILITIES	2,299,281	2,729,946	2,825,759	95,813	3.39%
(561010) ELECTRICITY	1,469,158	1,691,908	1,761,232	69,324	3.94%
(561011) NATURAL GAS	665,055	824,160	846,571	22,411	2.65%
(561020) GENERATOR FUEL	466	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%
(561021) GASOLINE	15,217	15,382	17,506	2,124	12.13%
(561022) DIESEL	0	200	100	-100	-100.00%
(561030) WATER	149,386	197,296	199,350	2,054	1.03%

There is utilities increase of \$95,813 (3.39%) It’s worth noting that this past year there was a \$200,000 deficit for HVAC and electrical services due to Covid mitigation efforts. These mitigation efforts included circulating more fresh air and regular checks on the HVAC systems. So, while there was a decrease in plumbing costs in FY21 (because the buildings were more

gently used), that decrease did not result in a utilities cost savings.

### **Voted**

By a vote of 5-0-0 the Capital Subcommittee voted **to approve \$9,116,024** for the FY21 Building Department operating budget. (As initially voted, P. Lodish was not in attendance during the March 12<sup>th</sup> vote and therefore, was not included in the vote tally).

Capital Subcommittee  
FY 22 Building Department CIP Requests  
March 16, 2021

### **Town/School Building – ADA Renovations**

#### **Recommendation: \$85,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

Funds for this program are allocated on an annual basis in order to bring both Town and School buildings into compliance with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act. Some of the money is spent on predetermined projects, while the rest is held in reserve to respond in a timely manner to requests that are received during the year.

A portion of the FY 21 funds have been used to install automatic door openers (both touchless and touch-operated) in such locations as the side doors of Town Hall and of the Health Department building. This type of work will continue in FY 22, along with the installation of automatic hand towel dispensers and automatic flushometers.

### **Town/School Buildings – Energy Conservation Projects**

#### **Recommendation: \$165,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

CIP funds are used to decrease energy consumption in Town and School buildings. Actions include, but are not limited to, lighting retrofit and controls, energy efficient motors, insulation, heating and cooling equipment, and installation of variable frequency drives that control the speed of motors for pumps and fans. In addition, water conservation efforts are explored.

FY 21 Energy Conservation dollars were used to support the continuation of LED lighting installation in the Brookline Village branch of the Library and in the Public Safety Building. In the coming fiscal year, LED lighting will be installed in the Lawrence and Runkle Schools, Putterham Golf Course Clubhouse, and maintenance facility at Larz Anderson Park.

Related to this work has been the installation of solar panels at the Florida Ruffin Ridley School, which are expected to be fully operational in about three weeks. Solar panels are also scheduled to be installed at the Runkle School, Kirrane Aquatics Center/Tappan Gym, Brookline High School, Heath School, and Municipal Services Center.

### **Town/School Buildings – Envelope/Fenestration Repairs**

#### **Recommendation: \$750,000 (General Fund Bond)**

Ten years ago \$250,000 was appropriated for costs associated with repairs to the outside envelope of all Town and School buildings, including a visual inspection of the exterior of all buildings to help prioritize these repairs. The master plan that was prepared by a consultant included a priority list and a schedule that called for the investment of \$27.45 million over a 30-year period. Over time, the replacement of the Old Lincoln School

retaining wall and support structures was added to the list, along with chimney inspection and repairs, including the installation of new metal liners.

In FY 22, repointing, caulking, and sealant work will take place at Fire Station 4 (Reservoir Road and Route 9) and at the New Lincoln School, and a new door will be installed for the public restrooms at Larz Anderson Park.

### **Public Building Fire Alarm Upgrades**

#### **Recommendation: \$175,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

CIP dollars are used in this program to upgrade and maintain the fire alarm and fire protection systems in Town and School buildings, based on the recommendations in the study undertaken by Garcia, Galuska & Desousa.

In FY 21 maintenance, repair and replacement work took place or will take place at the Senior Center, Public Safety building, Health Department building, Municipal Services Center, Eliot Recreation Center, and High School. In FY 22 similar work will be undertaken at the Heath and Baldwin Schools, Brookline Village branch of the Library, and Water Division facility on Netherlands Road.

### **Town/School Building – Security/Life Safety Systems**

#### **Recommendation: \$170,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

CIP funds are used to fund security improvements in Town and School buildings, including upgrades of cameras from analog to digital and replacement of doors, door frames, and locks (as needed) as well as the continuation of the ongoing program to replace and install upgraded burglar alarms, sprinkler systems, emergency lighting, and egress signs.

In the coming fiscal year, funds will be directed to purchasing and installing additional keycard readers, upgrading keycard software and Town Hall cameras, modifying the sprinkler system in Town Hall, and inspecting and repairing fire escapes in various buildings.

## FIRE STATION RENOVATIONS

Advisory Committee Capital Subcommittee

March 30, 2021

The Capital Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee held a public hearing on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to discuss a proposal for the renovation of four fire stations and the possible replacement of Station 5 (Babcock Street). Such renovations are intended to extend the useful life of the existing stations for approximately 20-30 years. Attending the hearing were Subcommittee members John Doggett, Harry Friedman, Amy Hummel, Carol Levin, Pam Lodish, and Carla Benka. Also in attendance were Chief John Sullivan, Building Commissioner Dan Bennett, Director of Public Buildings Charlie Simmons, Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, Brookline Firefighters Local 950 President Paul Trahon, Brookline Firefighters Local 950 Co-chair of the Human Relations Committee Patricia Cripe, Advisory Committee member Cliff Brown, and Fred Levitan and other members of the public.

At the end of the hearing, the Subcommittee determined that it did not have sufficient information to vote and moved to continue its discussion to March 12th at 10:45 a.m., at which time it voted as set forth below.

### Background

There are five fire stations in Brookline: Station 1 (Washington Street and Route 9); Station 4 (Route 9 and Reservoir Road); Station 5 (Babcock Street); Station 6 (Hammond Street); and Station 7 (Washington Square). Together they house five Engines, two Ladders, one “Quint”, one (unstaffed) light rescue, and two ambulances, owned and operated by Fallon Ambulance. Each station provides living, cooking, and sleeping quarters as well as administrative office space. Depending on the station, there can be between 4-5 personnel with or without 2-3 paramedics, to 9-11 personnel occupying a station at any given time.

In 2013, a study with schematic designs was undertaken by CBI Consulting, Inc. CBI focused on the conditions of four fire stations (Station 5 on Babcock Street was not part of the study) and what would be needed to maintain the integrity of the floors and buildings themselves to accommodate newer, larger fire equipment. The work outlined in the CBI report included flooring, shoring, beams, columns, and structural work. It also included recommendations for the HVAC systems, generators, lighting, and life safety as well as mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP) systems.

The report broke the work into three categories: (1) structural, (2) life safety systems, and (3) MEP. The recommended approach was to fund all required structural work in the first year (\$625,000 was approved in FY12), then fund life safety systems by stations as prioritized by the Fire Chief (FY13 – FY15), and then undertake the MEP work (starting in FY17).

As the MEP work began, additional funding was requested for the industrial cleaning of the firehouses and reconfiguration of their spaces to mitigate potential environmental hazards in the stations. It should be noted that this type of project has been and continues to be implemented in Boston, Newton, Cambridge, Auburn, and other communities to address the growing concern with cancer-related illnesses in the fire service.

The existence of carcinogens – both gas and particulates – throughout fire stations has been recognized for a number of years. While it was known that exposure to particulate matter is a result of exposure to fires and that fire fighting gear worn during a fire carries particulate matter back to the firehouse, subsequently contaminating living quarters, research conducted within recent years has focused on the air quality within firehouses.

Acknowledging the studies that looked at chemical exposure on the fireground, a research associate at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health decided to look at air quality in three older Boston firehouses and a newly constructed firehouse in Arlington. Based on her research, she concluded that “the building layout and design had the potential to influence exposure at the firehouse, despite every single one of the firehouses in the study having some form of diesel capture system to collect fire truck exhaust.” Peak times of fine particulate matter from diesel exhausts were found in the living quarters of the older fire houses when the truck left and returned from a call, while in the new firehouse there was not “an abundance of fine particulate matter in the living quarters.”<sup>1</sup>

As one Brookline firefighter said, “At least personal protection equipment provides me with protection when I’m fighting a fire but nothing protects me once I’m back at the station.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Researcher looking for link between firehouses and high incidences of cancer among firefighters” Craig Semon, [Worcester] Telegram and Gazette, November 28, 2018.

Existing funds in a special appropriations account were used to engage the engineering firm of Garcia, Galuska, & DeSousa (GG&D) to produce a study that included an environmental zoning analysis, review of various code requirements and potential code issues impacting future renovations of the fire stations, a hazmat survey, existing conditions report on fire safety, plumbing, water, natural gas, and compressed air systems, and cost estimates. Cost estimates for Fire Stations #1 and #5 were used as a basis for determining cost estimates for the other three stations.

The report recommended implementing environmental zone updates which included painting all walls and ceilings; replacing all acoustic/porous ceiling tiles; and replacing all soft furniture, including window treatments, beds, mattresses, and fabric partitions. It also recommended installing gasketed doors; HVAC modifications; relocation of equipment; and installation of eye wash stations and sinks. Finally, it proposed specific cleaning procedures to be used throughout all firehouses for all non-porous surfaces and ductwork.

Heavy emphasis was placed on the installation of enhanced HVAC equipment to create pressurized controls between working and living spaces and to create zones along with the implementation of enhanced policy and procedural decontamination standards and habits. Specifically, negative and positive pressure differences between the zones would limit the flow of contaminants between the garage or contaminated working areas of the stations, a pass-through zone of neutral or reduced contamination and the contamination-free living quarters. As proposed, there would be need to be some changes to the physical structure of some stations to create the needed flow from zone to zone.

Total cost for the project as of April 2019 was estimated at \$7,129,297.

Following on the heels of this first report, GG&D was engaged again, this time to address the long overlooked and long overdue need to integrate and accommodate female firefighters (in Brookline, the first female firefighter was hired in 1998) in fire houses that were designed during eras when the profession included only men. Although some well-intentioned changes have been made in the past few years to address these needs, there has been insufficient funding to implement the types of changes necessary to make the spaces for male and female firefighters equitable.

GG&D was asked to propose changes to the interior layout of all stations that specifically addressed privacy equity in bathroom and changing facilities for the current number of female firefighters, with the further request that such redesigned spaces would have the flexibility and capacity to accommodate an anticipated growing female workforce in the future. They were also asked to review male and female “bunks” from a logistics standpoint.

Although lactation spaces were not directly addressed in GG&D’s second report, representatives of the Human Relations Committee of Brookline Firefighters Local 950 has expressed concern on a number of occasions with the lack of acceptable accommodations at all fire stations for lactating firefighters, noting that a dedicated, self-contained pod along the lines of those designed by Mamava ([www.mamava.com](http://www.mamava.com)) should be considered in any new construction.

The projected cost of renovating all of the stations, based on the second GG&D study, increased to \$21,538,540 and took into account Fossil Free Fuel HVAC systems and electrical service upgrades.

### Discussion

As noted, the Capital Subcommittee met two times to discuss the Fire Station program, largely because the updated cost estimates for the project, received by Chief Sullivan from GG&D just hours before the first hearing, reflected an increase of \$1,354,865 from the November 2019 estimate (for a total cost of \$22,893,405) and presented the option of replacing, rather than renovating, Station 5, so that the projected cost for a new Station 5, plus four renovated stations, now totaled \$40,635,948.

Further discussions conducted by GG&D, Hastings Consulting Inc. (code compliance consultants for this project), and members of the Building and Fire Departments pertaining to the layout and construction of Station 5 concluded that although built in 1965 and therefore the “newest” of the five stations, it does not lend itself to renovations, and that spending in excess of \$3 million dollars for renovations would still not result in a building that would have parity with the other stations once they were upgraded. The floor plan of Station 5 has little flexibility; the kitchen is too small; the structure is built on slab and therefore lacks a basement, thus making HVAC renovations more difficult; and there is no second floor on which to locate

sleeping quarters to distance them from the apparatus bay. The air quality and lack of air movement contribute to an unhealthy environment, and although diesel exhaust recovery systems are attached to the exhaust pipes of all trucks, there is still residual when trucks pull out of the station and when they return.

During the discussion of replacement vs. renovation, it was suggested that the parking lot on Babcock Street be “swapped” with 49 Babcock Street as a site for a new station. This would allow the existing Station 5 to remain operational during the construction of a new facility.

Identifying a new site for Station 7 (Washington Square) was also discussed, largely because the existing station is so old (built in 1898) and its site so constrained. However, in the view of subcommittee members, taking a property, particularly a developed one, by eminent domain would be problematic not only because of the expense but also the likelihood of delaying the start of the badly needed work. However, it was noted that an undeveloped Washington Square site might offer an opportunity for relocating the station.

Lastly, the Subcommittee discussed the projected population growth and other factors that can impact public safety, to confirm that they are being taken into consideration as plans for the fire stations are developed. The growth in South Brookline in the near-term, due to the expansion of Hancock Village, raises the question of whether the department as currently structured will have the capability to serve the southern portion of the town. In response, Chief Sullivan stated that adding a ladder truck in South Brookline should be considered, and his recommendation would be to locate it at Station 4, at the corner of Reservoir Road and Route 9. The Chief noted his agreement with the 2019 IAFF analysis that found that housing a ladder truck at the centralized location of Station 4 would increase the department’s 6-minute ladder response capabilities in South Brookline. In addition, the IAFF analysis found that placing another company at that location would improve response capabilities through the town.

The IAFF’s findings dovetail nicely with the Fire Station project. If the project moves forward, Station 4 will be first on the list to be upgraded and at the same time it will be redeveloped into a two-company facility so that it can serve as the “swing” station while other stations are being renovated. At the end of the entire project, because of its redesign, it will have the capacity

to accommodate a ladder company. An additional company, to be fully functional, translates into hiring 20 additional firefighters.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of timing, as presented, plans call for the Fire Station Renovation Program to be completed over a course of five to seven years. Each station would need to be vacated during the renovation, with the exception of Station 5 if a new station were to be built on the nearby site. The apparatus and personnel from the affected station would be temporarily reassigned. The renovation of each station is currently estimated to take between 8-18 months, depending on the size and complexity of the project.

Given the projected project cost, a debt-exclusion ballot question would need voter approval in order to have sufficient funding to undertake the project.

Members of the Capital Subcommittee expressed support for the planned renovations, the replacement of Station 5, and the exploration of “swapping” the site of the current Station 5 with the Babcock Street parking lot. The Subcommittee also noted that Section 3.7.2 (“Project Procedures”) of the Town’s by-laws calls for a specific set of steps, including the review and approval of the feasibility study, schematic design, and design development stages by the Building Commission, and the appointment of a Committee of Seven by the Select Board. Funds currently in the Fire Station Renovations Special Appropriations (CIP) account are thought to be sufficient to develop the replacement of Station Five beyond the initial concept of a three-bay, two-story structure with living quarters and administrative space.

### Recommendation

A unanimous Capital Subcommittee voted to support the renovations of Stations 1, 4, 6, and 7 and the construction of a new Station 5 and encouraged the submission of the GG&D Master Plan with conceptual drawings to the Building Commission, using available CIP funds to pursue the next immediate step(s) in the process as outlined in the Town’s by-laws.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted, however, that in terms of staffing, Chief Sullivan’s first priority is to use a federal “Safer” grant to hire four Chief’s aides, to serve as incident command technicians. Their function is to assist a chief with accountability, safety, and communications on the fire ground, a role that is essential to the safety and wellness of fire fighters.

Additional Information

Garcia, Galuska & DeSousa, Inc., *Brookline Fire Stations Guidelines/Master Plan*, April 12, 2019

Garcia, Galuska & DeSousa, Inc., *Brookline Fire Stations Guidelines/Master Plan*, November 21, 2019

Brookline Firefighters Association Local 950 and Brookline Fire Department, *Emergency Services Response Analysis and Risk Assessment* October 2019

Brookline Fire Department, *Administrative Standard Operating Guideline: Lactation Breaks*

Acts of 2017, Ch. 54, *An Act Establishing The Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*