

Public Safety Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee  
Public Meeting with Chief of Police, Mark Morgan

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On January 6<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Public Safety Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee held a public meeting via Zoom with Acting Chief of Police Mark Morgan to discuss the status of the Brookline Police Department's FY 2022 budget and any near or near future budgetary needs of the department.

This is the first time the Subcommittee has held a public meeting prior to the publishing of the Town Administrator's Financial Plan, and prior to the public hearing(s) on the police department budget which take place once the Advisory Committee receives the Financial Plan, usually late February or early March.

### Staffing

Year-to-date 43.9% of the money allocated for permanent full-time salaries has been expended and 132% of the money allocated for overtime has been expended, with nearly 5 months left in FY 2022. The BPD is budgeted for 135 officers and right now the department is down 17-18 positions, so those salaries aren't being paid out and the overtime budget is being used to maintain minimum staffing requirements. At one time there were 151 budgeted positions – some officers worked in dispatch until the department went to a civilian dispatch.

When the department is fully staffed there are officers who can take on specialized assignments. A key area is traffic enforcement based on community complaints and incidents; "hot spots" such as Washington Street and Kent and Longwood can be covered. With additional staff the department could respond more broadly to neighborhood complaints, typically traffic and parking.

Since it is unknown when police will be called into action (as with the only other 24/7 staffed department, the Fire Department), full staffing is needed to be able to respond in a timely way. The latest statistics show that violent crime (including domestic violence) is trending down from 2020; thefts have gone up. Some of the trends, such as for breaking and entering (e.g., fewer calls for service in 2021) are Covid-related.

### Overtime

With staffing levels at minimum or slightly below minimum officers are being forced to work overtime hours. Historically, officers today are seeking more of a home/work balance and not wanting to work overtime. Forced OT usually means two 8-hour shifts; in a couple of cases

supervisors had to work 24 hours. A supervisor needs to be on duty for every shift. Forced OT has become more of an issue since the summer – a recent surge of Covid in the department has impacted the need for forced OT. Forced OT particularly hits the younger officers who might have to do OT five days in a row. This is largely due to union seniority rules. The Chief would prefer to be able to spread it out. Officers also prefer detail work to overtime.

### Career Development

With fewer staff, it hasn't been possible to do specialized 5-day trainings, which would require other officers to do more overtime. These trainings boost morale and affect career development. Patrol officers are encouraged to train and study for promotional exams. One has to be a patrol officer for three years to take the sergeant's exam, but now it's typically 4 to 5 years. LEDA (Law Enforcement Development Association) has a 3-step program for leadership training. Fewer training opportunities also limit the department's ability to backfill the lost detectives due to training requirements.

### Recruits

The Chief asked for 9 officer recruits. Five\* will enter the Police Academy on January 17<sup>th</sup> and another four will be in the May Police Academy. The first group of officers will be able to be deployed on their own around June; the second group not until the very end of the year. It takes about a year from the time the department gets the list, recruits go through Police Academy and then field training in Brookline, to have an officer on the street. Significant staffing shortages will remain for 2022. [\*4 names were submitted for SB approval on 1/11]

Impact on BPD diversity for those officers who have left. 1 woman detective transferred to Massport, 1 West Indian officer transferred to Weymouth, 1 black officer transferred to Everett. Three of the younger recruits (2 years in the BPD) have transferred out (1 to Weymouth; 2 to Everett). Some exit interviews have been conducted by Deputy Superintendent Richard Allen and Chief Morgan. Increased salary/benefits and/or proximity to home are among the factors. There is no formal evaluation tool other than surveys conducted by the union.

### FY 2023 Capital and Operating Budget Needs

Aligning with the Town's climate action goals the BPD has started to convert the cruiser fleet to hybrid vehicles. Unlike other departments, these vehicles need to be in service 24/7. So far, the experience has been that these vehicles are out of service more than other vehicles – they will need to be replaced after only a couple of years of service. With vehicles out of service, it has not been possible to have times when vehicles are not in use so they can be thoroughly cleaned. This has been a particular problem during Covid. The cruiser budget was cut and the BPD needs more cruisers.

The Chief is asking for a 20% increase across the board – office supplies, training, licenses and services costs have all increased – and an increase in salaries. Cambridge officers recently received a 13% increase in salary, though details of the increase were not known.

When asked about the status of body camera grants, the subcommittee was informed that the Town needs a policy first to be able to apply for a grant, but that there will be future grant opportunities once the policy has been adopted.

The members of the subcommittee thanked Chief Morgan for his 39 years of service to the Town, for this status update on the BPD and wished him well on his upcoming leave.