

Public Safety Subcommittee
Advisory Committee

RE: Fire Department RFT Request

To review the recording of this hearing click on the link and when prompted enter the passcode:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/play/HZyVa-yK_13pGzRTRqfDY5sD6oigzx2VX_guhloBAX4VcFrsEnlftyM_P2vatBfEW5nJePMzGGNQ9ucw.JkHJF6_M0i9U8JuW

Passcode: 2MbK&laR

The Public Safety Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee held a public hearing on February 15, 2022 at 4:45, via Zoom, to discuss and vote on a recommendation for a Reserve Fund Transfer request made by the Fire Department.

The subcommittee met with Chief Sullivan who prepared a detailed PowerPoint presentation to explain the need for an additional \$71,000 in the “Uniforms & Protective Clothing” account #539035 to cover the cost of purchase of 2 sets of firefighting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the upcoming class of 11 recruit firefighters.

Background:

Historically, the Uniforms & Protective Clothing line item had been budgeted around \$40-45K, with some years’ actuals showing a small deficit or small surplus depending on whether or not there was a new recruit class. The last group of recruits was trained in 2019, and in FY20 the budget was a little over \$67,000, and the actual expenditure was somewhat over \$45K. With expected shortfalls in the Town budget due to Covid and no projected recruit class in FY21, that line item was dropped to a little over \$17K and remained at that level for FY22 given the ongoing impact of COVID on both expenditures and available resources. On February 14th 2022, eleven recruits started training and will need to be fitted with turnout gear.

Uniforms & Protective Clothing is part of a larger category of “Fire Administration & Supplies,” which is budgeted for \$127,000. With a third of the year still to go, 78% of the funds have already been expended.

Discussion:

The subcommittee asked whether with the new class of 11 recruits there was now a full complement of firefighters and were informed that was now the case. Another question concerned the \$50K drop in funding from FY20 to FY21. Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff explained that the AC put an extra \$1M into the Reserve Fund anticipating that there could likely be shortfalls in departmental budgets due to the COVID-related reductions, such as what occurred for this line item.

At the end of the meeting Acting Finance Director/Treasurer Justin Casanova-Davis advised the subcommittee that there is currently a sizeable payroll deficit in the Fire Department that will need to be addressed once there is a final number, and that Chief Sullivan will be returning for another RFT later in the fiscal year.

Recommendation:

The Subcommittee voted 4-0-0 in favor of recommending the \$71,000 RFT for the Brookline Fire Department and thanked Chief Sullivan and Town staff for the thorough information and discussion.

AYE

David-Marc Goldstein
Neil Gordon
Alisa Jonas
Janice Kahn, Chair