

## FY21 Building Department Operating Budget

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Capital Subcommittee Public Hearing

February 25, 2020

The Capital Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met at 5:30pm in the Community Room at the Public Safety Building. In attendance were subcommittee chair, Carla Benka; sub-committee members Amy Hummel, Harry Friedman, Pamela Lodish, Fred Levitan; Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Director of Public Buildings, Charlie Simmons; Building Commissioner, Dan Bennett; Ray Masik, Building Department; Ruthann Dobek, the Senior Center; and Yolanda Rodriguez, the Council on Aging.

### 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-48 is **\$9,010,485** for FY21.

	<b>FY19 Actual</b>	<b>FY20 Budget</b>	<b>FY21 Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Salary</b>	2,627,702	2,712,657	<b>2,817,103</b>	104,446	<b>3.85%</b>
<b>Services</b>	2,952,588	3,205,653	<b>3,322,258</b>	116,605	<b>3.65%</b>
<b>Supplies</b>	30,159	29,750	<b>29,750</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>Other</b>	6,198	13,900	<b>14,800</b>	900	<b>6.47%</b>
<b>Utilities</b>	2,641,996	2,567,943	<b>2,732,204</b>	164,261	<b>6.40%</b>
<b>Budgeted Capital</b>	93,960	83,370	<b>94,370</b>	11,000	<b>13.19%</b>

The increase in **salaries** is largely the result of **Steps increases** as well as the addition of a **new full time inspector**, which has been a Building Department expansion request for a few years. They are happy to have this new position. The focus of the new hire will be multi-family inspections, which the Building Department had had a difficult time keeping up with given all of it's other responsibilities. It is possible that fees collected for multi-family inspections/permits, may pay generate approximately half of the amount of the new inspectors salary.

The department will also likely task the new inspector with managing (some) short-term rental complaints (guided by an anticipated vote by Town Meeting on relevant law in the upcoming Annual May 2020 Town Meeting).

Note: The Town does currently collect taxes on sort term rentals, but they are illegal under current zoning, which puts the Town in an odd position, which will hopefully soon be remedied.

As a reminder, **The Matrix Report**, completed in July 2016, provided the Town with a comprehensive evaluation and recommendations for Brookline's building program. This committee has heard the recommendations of the Matrix Report and received progress reports in meetings during the last three budget cycles. The Building Department continues to rely on the report for guidance in its 5-year plan.

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.

During the past five years the Building Department has had and continues to have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified HVAC and maintenance employees. The economy is strong and there are a limited number of skilled HVAC professionals. Additionally, the HVAC systems in the Town are old, and in some cases replacement parts are no longer available and in other cases, the equipment is new, complicated and expensive and difficult to fix. While the systems are under warranty, the warranty does not include the cost of maintenance or training for newer systems. The Town must pay those costs.

With a new Human Resources director in place, the department is **hoping to be able to offer higher pay in order to attract skilled HVAC professionals**, which in addition to budgeting challenges may present other personnel challenges as well.

Custodial services The department plans to higher a new custodial Forman. The Library uses Clean Co. and had it's own facilities director,

who recently left. There is a need for a coordinator to manage the team and projects in the Town.

Town/School Partnership – The Building department has submitted requests for \$325,000 from the School Department, which may impact the Building Department budget. The School Department has yet to discuss the requests, which would support the Building Department in its efforts to properly maintain the schools.

Income for Building Permit Revenue is down This change is largely viewed as a timing issue and not a worrisome trend. Building permit revenue largely depends on when permits are issued during the fiscal year. The revenue will most certainly increase again with further development at Hancock Village, Waldo Durgin, Brookline Place, and the Newbury College redevelopment. The initial comprehensive fee with all projects is generally the largest payment the Town receives, particularly for significant projects.

### **Additional Discussion Notes**

Complaint/Issue Management The department continues to field complaints using Acela complaint registry system. Examples of common issues include: tree cutting (with the advent of a recent Town Meeting vote which requires Town approval in some cases); apartment over-crowding; short term rental issues; idling complaints, early or late (before 8 or after 8) construction, as well as multi-department issues related to life-safety and HVAC.

Neighborhood parking congestion related to large building or clustered building projects. A committee member asked about any policies the Building Department has regarding parking associated with building projects. Because there has been an increase in building permits, there are instances in which some neighborhoods experience parking congestion due to the number of construction vehicles.

The Building Commissioner noted that parking plans for projects of a particular size may be useful. In the past the practice was to require individuals associated with a project to take a copy of the building permit to 4<sup>th</sup> floor (Transportation) to obtain a pass for builders. Transportation has currently suspended that operation for commercial projects (but not private builders).

Demolitions and Town Records When a building is demolished or “disappears” the Town expunges the building’s records. For historical purposes, a member of the committee made a request to institute a practice of digitizing the records before destruction.

The use of School Dude for scheduling The Town has used this scheduling tool for many years, which includes benefits such as the ability to log-on and schedule rooms throughout Town owned and controlled buildings, in some cases warming or cooling rooms before use, as applicable. However, it does not include a mechanism to provide for the number of anticipated attendees, which means that rooms are often scheduled on a first come, first served basis, regardless of required seating capacity, leaving some large groups stuffed into smaller rooms and smaller groups with more room than they need. The Director of Public Buildings (his office) does approve the room use and may adjust scheduling based on group need if necessary.

### **Voted**

By a vote of 5-0-0 the Capital Subcommittee voted to approve the Building Department Operating Budget for the requested amount of \$9,010,485, for FY21.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CAPITAL SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE  
BUILDING DEPARTMENTS FY 21 CIP REQUESTS.  
March 5, 2020**

**4. GARAGE FLOOR SEALANTS**

**Subcommittee Recommendation: \$215,000 (Revenue Financed)**

Sealants are required every seven years for concrete suspended floors. If the floor is not properly sealed to prevent corrosion of the concrete and rebar, the floor will deteriorate rapidly. This will lead to premature failure and costly repairs including new concrete and possibly structural repairs.

Funds in the amounts of \$50,000 and \$100,000, previously allocated in FY 14 and FY 16, would be combined with the currently requested \$215,000 for work on the garage floors in 1) Fire Stations 1, 4, 6, 7; 2) the Municipal Service Center; 3) the Main Library.

**5. TOWN REHAB/UPGRADES**

**Subcommittee Recommendation: \$60,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash) with the intent to seek additional funds for the program**

This program, instituted in 2017, uses CIP funds for the repair and upgrade of Town facilities during the time between major renovation projects. Items funded under the program include large-scale painting programs, new flooring, ceilings, window treatments and toilet upgrades. There is currently more than a \$300,000 backlog of work to be done. In FY 21, needed work includes

- Health Department building: flooring replacement throughout the entire building (\$45,000) and painting the entire interior (\$55,000);
- Public Safety building: stair treads (\$32,000) and painting (\$4200); and
- Senior Center: flooring (\$25,710) and painting (\$33,750)

Unless more funding becomes available, these projects will need to be spread over several years and other projects will continue to be postponed.

**57. HVAC EQUIPMENT**

**Subcommittee Recommendation: \$150,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

The HVAC Equipment Program is intended to undertake proactively, rather than reactively, the replacement of the larger and more expensive parts of boilers, air conditioners (including compressors), and other HVAC equipment before an emergency arises. The cost of this type of work exceeds the limits of the Building Department's Operations and Maintenance budget, hence the creation of this program within the CIP.

Current plans call for replacing air conditioning compressors and upgrading equipment, starting with the oldest equipment and working in the off-season. There are currently 199 permanent air conditioning systems in both Town and School buildings. Their sizes range from two to 100+ tons and many are 10 years or older. Typically, air conditioning compressors last between five and 10 years, and replacement costs can range from \$3,500 to \$150,000, depending on the size of the system.

HVAC Equipment funds are also used to replace gas-fired equipment with equipment for heat and for hot water that does not use fossil fuels, thus working towards meeting the Town's goal to achieve zero emissions by 2050. FY 21 funds will be directed towards the purchase and installation of split-unit heat pumps and air handling units in various spaces of the Baker School

## **58. UNDERGROUND TANK REMOVAL**

### **Subcommittee Recommendation: \$100,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

There are 26 underground oil tanks located on school and municipal building sites throughout the town. They have 30-year warranties, but some of the tanks are approaching 25 years of age. The current schedule calls for 17 of these tanks to be removed and replaced. CIP funds would be used to remove the large tanks with capacities of between 5,000-15,000 gallons and replace them with aboveground tanks with a capacity of 1000 gallons or less, inside the buildings. Older, 275-gallon underground tanks would be replaced with new tanks of the same size, also aboveground and inside the buildings.

Existing boilers and burners are currently functioning well and do not merit replacement. They are designed to use either natural gas or oil. New, aboveground oil tanks inside the buildings provide the assurance that the buildings will be kept heated in case of an emergency or gas shortage.

If funds become available from the Commonwealth's Underground Storage Tank Fund, 50% of the cost of removal (generally \$50,000) would be reimbursable, thus potentially expanding the scope of the FY 21 program, which currently includes tanks at the Old Lincoln, Baker, Heath and Baldwin Schools and at Town Hall.

## **59. TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING - ADA RENOVATIONS**

### **Subcommittee Recommendation: \$80,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

Support for this annual program of improvements is requested to bring Town and School buildings into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that the Town make public buildings accessible to all.

FY 20 funds have been budgeted to widen a door at the High School, to modify a family changing room at the Kirrane Aquatic Center, to add vision tape to the staircases

at the Driscoll School, and to install automatic door openers at the main branch of the library.

In FY 21 funds will be enable the Town to continue to respond to requests for ADA accommodations in public buildings.

## **60. TOWN/SCHOOL ELEVATOR RENOVATION PROGRAM**

### **Subcommittee Recommendation: \$200,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

There are 47 elevators, LULAs (Limited Use/Limited Application), and wheelchair lifts throughout Town and School buildings. When a building is renovated, most elevators are upgraded (new controls, motors, cables, refurbishment of the car, etc.). Some elevators are also partially upgraded to meet the requirements of the existing building codes. The buildings that have not been renovated have elevators that are close to 30 years old. Maintenance is an issue and parts are increasingly difficult to find. The elevator's controller is basically a computer. The controller needs to be upgraded or replaced as technology progresses and older technology is not supported. This project would upgrade those cars and lifts with new equipment.

Full funding has been secured for the modernization of the elevators at the Unified Arts Building and the Lynch Recreation Center. Other elevators due for renovation include those at the Sperber Education Center, High School, Municipal Service Center, Water Department building on Netherlands Road, Baker School, and Senior Center. It is anticipated that the modernization of the elevators at the High School will be undertaken as part of the High School Renovation and Expansion Project, while funding for the elevator in the Water Department Building will come from the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund. FY 21 funds will enable work to proceed with the elevator in the Municipal Service Center.

## **61. TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING - ENERGY CONSERVATION**

### **Subcommittee Recommendation: \$190,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

Efforts to decrease energy consumption in Town and School buildings include, but are not limited to, lighting retrofit and controls, energy efficient motors, insulation, and heating and cooling equipment. This program augments existing gas and electric utility conservation programs along with Green Communities Grants.

FY 20 funds supported the installation of LED lights at the new Lincoln School (Phase 2) and the Health Department and the installation of fans in the Baker School auditorium, gym, cafeteria, and multi-purpose room.

Plans call for FY 21 funds to be use for Phase Two of LED lighting at the Main Library (representing a savings of approximately 25,000 KWH per year; LED lighting at the Putterham Clubhouse (representing a savings of approximately 3500 KWH per year); and LED lighting at the Public Safety Building (representing a savings of approximately

5,000 KWH per year. In addition, funds will be used to install variable frequency drives on the pumps at the Municipal Services Center and Main Library (representing a savings of approximately 3000 and 4500 KWH per year, respectively).

**62. TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING - ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**  
**Subcommittee Recommendation: \$125,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

This project's purpose is to upgrade the energy management systems in Town and School buildings. A few of the larger buildings have older (30 years) energy management systems that have exceeded their life expectancy and replacement parts are no longer available. These systems will be replaced and upgraded with new web-based systems integrated into the Town's existing computer network. Other systems will be upgraded with newer software or firmware. The Building Department will continue to work with the Information Technology Department on these projects.

Plans for FY 21 include replacing the existing Siemens system for the High School complex with Johnson Controls and upgrading software for the server as well as replacing older controllers at the Soule Recreation Center, Soule Gym, and Lawrence School with Johnson controllers, which are electronic devices for digital control of packaged air handling units, unit ventilators, fan coils, heat pumps, and other terminal units serving a single zone or room

**64. TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING – ROOF REPAIR/REPLACEMENT PROGRAM**

**Subcommittee Recommendation as of 3/3/20: \$3,100,000 (General Fund Bond)**

A master plan for repair and replacement of roofs on all Town and School buildings was prepared by a consultant. The plan includes a priority list and schedule and calls for \$29.3 million over a 20-year period.

The list of roofs for repair/replacement in FY 21 include the Heath School (EPDM roof - \$1,100,710); indoor pavilion of Larz Anderson Skating Rink (painted steel roof - \$24,015); New Lincoln cafeteria building (shingle - \$150,097); and Pierce Primary building (EPDM - \$30,019). Town Meeting will also be asked to authorize the bonding of an additional \$1,601,032 to be used for work on the Lawrence School roof that, if scheduling permits, would start in FY 21.

**65. PUBLIC BUILDING FIRE ALARMS UPGRADES**

**Subcommittee Recommendation: \$300,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

The Town engaged with Garcia, Galuska & Desousa to conduct a study to assess the existing fire alarm and fire protection systems. The funding will allow the Building Department to address the recommendations in the study to properly maintain and upgrade these systems, including replacing the panels and fire alarm devices.

On the list for FY 21 are the Heath and Lawrence Schools, Water Department building on Netherlands Road, and the Soule Recreation Center and gym.

## **66. TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING - SECURITY/LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS**

### **Subcommittee Recommendation: \$160,000 (Property Tax/Free Cash)**

Over the last number of years, several large capital projects have been undertaken that included security improvements in Town and School buildings. This program will extend the effort and improve areas where security may be lacking. These funds would also be used to continue the on-going process of replacement and installation of new and upgraded burglar alarms, sprinkler systems, emergency lighting, and egress signs.

FY 20 funds have been budgeted for the replacement of the keycard system in the Public Safety Building; upgrading additional cameras at Town Hall from analog to digital, fire escape inspections, and in school buildings, installing Lock Down buttons to call police, burglar alarms, and other security enhancements.

Work planned for FY 21 includes additional keycard readers, camera upgrades from analog to digital, sprinkler modification in the “lower” Town Hall garage, inspections of plaster ceilings, upgrades for the Aiphone systems (used to permit entry in a school building), and other security measures including the ongoing replacement of doors, door frames, and locks, as needed.