The Public Safety Subcommittee held a public hearing on the Police Department Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 25th in Town Hall Room 308. Attending were: Chief of Police Andrew Lipson, Kevin Mascoll (Public Safety Business Manager), Paul Cullinane (BPD), Michael Keaveney (Brookline Police Union), Paul Trahon (Brookline Fire Union), Joan Corey (Teamsters Local 25 – Public Safety Dispatcher), Scott Wilder (BPD), Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis, Claire Stampfer (TMM 5), John VanScoyoc (TMM 13) and the members of the Public Safety Subcommittee: Alisa Jonas, David-Marc Goldstein, Susan Granoff, and Janice Kahn (Chair).

Budget Summary:

Salaries are increased by $37,169 (0.23%), largely due to an increase of $169,361 in permanent FT positions, partially offset by a reduction in Educational Incentive Pay ($2,067), Quinn Education Incentive ($6,953) and Longevity Pay ($1,375). Services are reduced by 25.44%, largely driven by a shift in accounting so that online transaction fees of $274,040 are no longer charged to the Police Department Operating Budget, but carried under the Finance Department. Removing that item, there is an actual reduction of 14% due to a decrease in the cost of Communications Equipment R&M of $23,000 and a $5,000 savings in Public Safety Equipment R&M. These savings are partially offset by increases in Professional/Technical Services ($10,000), bottle water service ($4,000) and a new line item Veterinary Services ($1,000).

Supplies show a small decrease of $5,000 (2.04%).

Other (In-State Travel, Education/Training/Conferences/Professional Dues) remains level-funded at $91,000.

Utilities are up #22,937 (7.8%) due primarily to an increase in gasoline of $23,901 (21.62%) which is only partially offset by a $3,885 (12.83%) decrease in the cost of natural gas.

Budgeted Capital is level-funded at $556,169. Increases in Public Safety Equipment ($40,000) and Leased Computer Equipment ($3,600) are offset by a $43,600 reduction in the budgeted capital for automobiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY19 Actual</th>
<th>FY20 Budget</th>
<th>FY21 Budget</th>
<th>2020-1 Variance</th>
<th>2020-21 Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SALARIES</strong></td>
<td>$16,697,102</td>
<td>$16,254,406</td>
<td>$16,291,575</td>
<td>37,169</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>999,118</td>
<td>719,471</td>
<td>536,431</td>
<td>-183,040</td>
<td>-25.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPLIES</strong></td>
<td>285,455</td>
<td>244,900</td>
<td>239,900</td>
<td>-5,000</td>
<td>-2.04%</td>
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The Public Safety Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0-0 recommends favorable action on the Police Department FY 21 Operating Budget of $18,031,107.

In addition, the Subcommittee discussed two Police Department FY 21 Expansion Requests:

(1) The Brookline Police Department (BPD) has 58-60 cruisers, which are replaced on a schedule approximately every five years – 10 cruisers/year. The cost of purchasing utility hybrid vehicles is higher than the cost of purchasing the Taurus Police Interceptor cruisers which Ford Motor Company has discontinued. The BPD needs to purchase 10 hybrid vehicles at $52,706 each for a total cost of $527,060. The current budget falls short by $27,338 and so there is an expansion request for that additional funding to purchase the full 10 vehicles needed by the BPD.

A side note is that the Department is now purchasing black vehicles with a white wrap (identifying information) which have a higher resale value, rather than white vehicles with a blue wrap.

The Public Safety Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0-0 recommends that this expansion request for $27,338 be approved if additional funding can be found.

(2) A second expansion request is for $10,000 to support a needs assessment of the now 20-year old Public Safety Building at 350 Washington Street, to enable the Police and Fire departments to continue to expand, recruit and hire more female Officers and Firefighters. One of the goals of the study would be to reallocate space within the building. This expansion request has already been approved by the 6th Floor.
DISCUSSION:

It was noted that crime statistics are down slightly, and that Brookline in recent years has had low rates of crime.

In the past Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), a Federal grant money through Department of Homeland Security, allowed local areas to determine their own security needs and spend the funds accordingly; that policy has changed so that now the Federal government will decide the local priorities.

PERSONNEL: In the past year there had been 22 vacancies and the Department has hired 17 officers. There are currently 7 vacancies, including an opening in the Detective Division. Chief Lipson noted that it is increasingly difficult to hire police officers; fewer people in Brookline want to be police officers. (This is a nationwide crisis: fewer people throughout the US want to be police officers these days.) For example, recently only 24 Brookline residents took the exam and 17 were offered positions; of those, 9 did not grow up in Brookline. This is due to a strong market for better paying employment opportunities in other fields combined with difficult police-community relations in some municipalities that discourage persons from entering the profession. Additionally, because Brookline’s pay for police officers is below that of other Massachusetts police departments with which Brookline competes for staffing, it is extremely difficult to get good-performing police officers working in police departments in other municipalities to apply for lateral transfers into Brookline’s Police Department. Conversely, a certain number of Brookline police officers opt to transfer to other communities’ police departments each year. In Cambridge, for example, police officer base pay is an estimated $15,000-20,000 higher than in Brookline.

One pay differential is in the education incentives offered to police officers, which has changed from the Quinn stipend, which since 1970 has offered annual payments of up to 25% for a Master’s degree (10% and 20% for associate’s and bachelor’s degrees respectively) of a police officer’s base salary as an educational incentive, to a flat $10,000 education incentive regardless of level of education for newer hires. Approximately half the officers get the Quinn incentive; half the officers get the flat rate education incentive.

NETA: Detective Lieutenant Paul Cullinane updated the Subcommittee on police enforcement in the area around NETA. He stated that the change in hours has helped and that there will be a 3-month assessment of these reduced hours. In January there was a public urination problem on White Place; he also stated there were 31 field reports and 64 directed patrols of the area. The Home Suites Hotel, which NETA had contracted with for parking spaces until 5 pm, is now allowing parking until 7 pm.
Sanctuary is due to open in April and the Transportation Department is granting parking meters on Beacon Street to be used by Sanctuary clients. Lieutenant Cullinane also noted that there will be Brookline details (undercover) at the two Commonwealth Avenue retail marijuana establishments and is hoping these businesses will be by appointment only. Those are located on the Boston border and so far Boston is not showing any interest in elevated enforcement of that area. He stated that communication with the surrounding neighborhoods is most important and needs to be coordinated.

In FY20 the BPD received $415,000 in impact fees from NETA, which has funded two walking beat officers from 3:30 – 7:30 PM Thursday to Sunday, which are the busiest times at NETA, and three FT Bike Unit officers. The funds include: $50K for undercover officers addressing public consumption; $30K for overtime for inspections; $95K for parking enforcement (2 new hires); $161K for the Bike Unit; $77K for benefit costs and non-personnel costs; $17K for training in mental health (drug recognition experts) and 1st level of training in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) for officers to recognize people driving under the influence.

The Subcommittee requested that the Department estimate the cost of assigning police resources to issues related to marijuana stores – both direct and indirect - so that the Town can assess to what extent Town revenue from these operations are covering the related costs.

DISPATCH STAFFING: The Emergency 911 Dispatch Communications Center which fields calls for public safety (Police and Fire) is critically understaffed and overworked. As set up 20 years ago, the dispatch center had 15 dispatchers and 1 supervisor. This is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by civilian dispatchers in three 8-hour shifts.

Dispatch calls are roughly 10% Fire and 80-90% Police; all of the dispatch operation costs are in the Police Department budget. There were a total of 99,303 calls to dispatch in FY 2019. The breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Calls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Calls</td>
<td>68,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Calls</td>
<td>8,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Calls</td>
<td>4,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-911 Calls</td>
<td>17,571</td>
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Right now the Dispatch Center has only 10 available dispatchers (3 have left and 2 are on restriction) and there is no supervisor. The consequence of this is that dispatchers are being forced to work 16 hour shifts or even longer, without proper rest periods. During the 7-week period between January 1st and February 18th of this year, there have been 98 overtime shifts, 56 of which were involuntarily forced shifts. The Subcommittee members heard from representatives of the three unions (fire, police and dispatch) and from Chief Lipson – all of whom agree that there is a critical public safety need to address this problem now.

Joan Coney, representing the Public Safety Dispatchers (Teamsters Local 25), described situations in which dispatchers were forced to work 24 hour shifts with only short break periods.
and nowhere to rest. This has taken a toll on their health and well-being, and their ability to spend time with their families. Dispatch is the 1st line of defense and it was emphasized that stressed and fatigued dispatchers place every person in the Town at some risk. An effective emergency response depends on the alertness of the dispatchers. All dispatchers must be both E911 Certified and EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatcher) Certified. It takes 3-6 months to become certified.

There is a serious problem with recruitment and retention of dispatchers, both because of excessive workloads and lack of adequate rest and because of low pay compared to dispatcher pay in other communities. Joan Coney noted that Brookline’s dispatchers get paid far less than those in Cambridge. There is also no opportunity for career advancement as dispatchers. The Dispatch Supervisor left to work in the regional center. Some dispatchers become police officers or firefighters. The Chief noted that in a good economy, working as a dispatcher is not attractive.

The solution in the works is to change the structure of the dispatch center to create a career ladder, with an overall Director and then a head dispatcher for each shift, which would mean 18 dispatchers instead of 15. The Chief is working with the HR Director to develop the job classifications for a restructured dispatch center. The union representatives also have a plan to develop the dispatch center from the original model as well as an immediate implementation strategy to deal with the current, urgent dispatch needs (such as two 12-hour shift options), and they have written jointly to the Chair of the Select Board to request a meeting.

The goal right now is to keep the current dispatchers healthy and improve their morale, and one suggestion was that the overworked dispatchers receive an incentive bonus beyond the overtime pay that they are currently receiving.

The Public Safety Subcommittee sees the current dispatch understaffing problem as a serious and urgent public safety issue impacting all Brookline residents.

The Public Safety Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0-0 recommends favorable action on the Police Department FY 21 Operating Budget of $18,031,107. It further unanimously recommends that the expansion request of $27,338 also be approved.