

**BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Public Safety Subcommittee

Report on FY2020 Police Department Budget

The Public Safety Subcommittee held a public hearing on the FY2020 Police Department Budget on Tuesday, February 26 at 5:30 PM in Brookline Town Hall, Room 308. Attending were Police Chief Andrew Lipson; Paul Campbell, Lieutenant, Office of Professional Responsibility; Scott Wilder, Police Technology Division; Kevin Mascoll, Public Safety Business Manager; Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Susan Howards, member of the Critical Infrastructure Monitoring System (CIMS) Camera Oversight Committee; and members of the subcommittee, Janice Kahn (chair), Susan Granoff, David-Marc Goldstein, and Alisa Jonas.

Proposed FY2020 Budget (See pp. IV-45–IV-51 of the *FY-2020 Financial Plan*)

	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY2018</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>FY2019</u>	<u>Request</u> <u>FY2020</u>	<u>\$Change</u>	<u>%Change</u>
Personnel	14,383,140	15,066,788	15,074,009	7,221	0.0%
Services	734,259	601,243	719,471	118,228	19.7%
Supplies	198,868	259,900	219,900	(40,000)	-15.4%
Other	131,843	74,000	74,000	0	0.0%
Utilities	281,635	282,373	293,095	10,722	3.8%
Capital	421,566	434,808	556,169	121,361	27.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,151,311</b>	<b>16,719,112</b>	<b>16,936,644</b>	<b>217,532</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
BENEFITS			9,264,806		
REVENUE	9,223,586	9,011,040	9,011,040	0	0.0%

Total recommended FTEs are 180.80

Summary

There is an overall budget increase of \$217,532 (1.3%). The largest increases are in Services, which goes up by \$118,228 (19.7%) and Capital, which increases by \$121,361 or 27.9%. The increase in the Services class of expenditures is due to an increase of \$85,968 for Professional/Technical Services and \$70,000 for Online Transaction Convenience Fees, both related to parking. The 27.9% increase in Capital Outlay is largely due to an increase to Automobiles, including 4 hybrid vehicles, for an increase of \$168,972. These increases are partially offset by a decrease of \$40,000 in Uniforms and Protective Clothing, and a decrease of \$16,500 in Public Safety Equipment and \$31,111 for Communication Equipment.

Discussion

NOTE: When looking at Brookline Police Department (BPD) metrics there are two factors to keep in mind: (1) for most of the year the Department had 22 vacancies, which meant that some

measures, such as inspections, were lower due to a lack of person-power; and, (2) the BPD compiles its year end reviews on a calendar year, but the statistics in the Financial Plan are reported on a Fiscal Year.

### *Personnel*

At this time last year, the Department had 22 vacancies, which was unusually high. Since that time, the Department has hired 17 recruits. As of today, there are 6 vacancies, and of these, 3 are being held open for veterans who have expressed interest and are currently deployed.

Recruitment of officers remains a challenge for the Department, as is the case in other communities. Locally morale has improved from last year, attributable to several factors including the final negotiation of the labor contract, the decrease in vacancies that has reduced workload pressures, and the internal hiring of the new Police Chief, who has had 21 years of experience in the Brookline police force. Nonetheless, the national climate, with the negative views of the police, resulting in lowered prestige, combined with the availability of higher paying careers in high tech in Massachusetts, has continued to discourage persons from pursuing a career in the police. The possibility of eliminating Civil Service exams as a means to access a broader pool of potential applicants was discussed. Chief Lipson noted that Norwood and Wellesley have replaced the use of the Civil Service exam with their own municipal exams, and they have hundreds of applicants. In municipalities that have Civil Service, the municipality must give preference to residents and disabled and other veterans. This might dissuade non-residents and non-veterans from applying. Eliminating the use of Civil Service could thus result in more applicants, though they likely are applying to other municipalities as well. Chief Lipson conjectures that Brookline would be viewed a favorable place of employment for such applicants, however. At the same time, the Town might be vulnerable to criticism of its exam if it were to no longer use the standardized Civil Service exam.

### *Capital Budget Increase for Hybrid Patrol Cars*

The Department has a total of 58 marked and unmarked police cars, with approximately 11 replacement vehicles funded each year. This year, the Department again is requesting funding for 11 vehicles, but of these 11, 4 are hybrids. Hybrids are more expensive than non-hybrid, but it is expected that the fuel savings from using the hybrids will be substantial, given that the vehicles average 30,000 miles/year; and the reduction in fuel also will reduce carbon generation. The Department is requesting only 4 hybrids this year since these types of vehicles have not been used in the past, and the 4 vehicles will serve as a pilot effort.

### *Services Budget Increase for new Contractor for Automated Ticketing*

The Department was dissatisfied with Dacron, its contractor for automated ticketing, and so has replaced it with Passport, which is more costly, but has improved service. An additional \$70,000 in the Services budget request is for the charges incurred by the Town for bank processing of online transaction convenience fees. These costs are not fully covered by customer payments of fees.

### *Local Crime Statistics*

While the statistics presented in the Financial Plan, which are for FY 2018, show an increase in Part A crimes from FY 2017, the statistics for the 2018 calendar year, presented in the 2018 Year End Review, show a slight decline from the 2017 calendar year: 721 crimes in 2018 compared with 739 crimes in 2017, a 2.4% decline. One of the bigger increases from FY 2017 to FY 2018 was for breaking and entering, but that increase is partially attributable to a particular set of individuals who were carrying out breaking and entering crimes in a broad number of communities in Greater Boston, and who were recently apprehended in the midst of burglarizing a home in Brookline with the help of fingerprints captured by the Brookline police from tools used by the perpetrators.

### *Police Activity*

Arrests, field interrogations, and the issuance of moving violations and parking tickets were all lower in 2018 than in 2017. In large part, this was due to the reduced staffing for much of 2018.

The reduction in arrests, however, also is due to an increased emphasis on diversion and accessing services for individuals with mental health issues instead of processing them through the criminal justice system. As of October 25, 2018, only 2 juveniles were arrested and processed through the juvenile justice system, whereas 28 juveniles who in the past might have been arrested were diverted or referred for services.

### *Training*

The Department has been focusing much training in recent years in the areas of mental health and crisis intervention and de-escalation, which has helped bring about the reduction in arrests and increase in referrals to services. In 2018, the Department held 6 such trainings for officers from other communities as a designated Training and Technical Assistance Center in the Greater Boston area.

The Department continues to provide diversity training annually to all officers as well as to new recruits during initial training, and also provides training in various other areas, including active shooter and tactical patrol skills.

### *Community Engagement*

A focus of the Police Department has continued to be Community Engagement, including such initiatives as:

- 1 full-time officer is at Brookline High School, located in Administration, and working with Superintendent Bott to help provide support for at-risk students.
- Walk and Talk Officers, who are the main liaisons between Brookline Housing Authority personnel and residents and the police department, are now working 7 nights a week, beginning after the school day ends, to identify residents in need of assistance, and to be better informed of potentially developing problems and reduce the incidence of crimes.

- The PD now has a social worker in the department who helps with Crisis Intervention Training
- When college students move into Brookline, they are given "The Blue View" which lays out Brookline rules and regulations

### *Cameras/Surveillance*

We reviewed the 2 semi-annual reports for 2018 submitted by Lieutenant Paul Campbell regarding the use of the 11 CIMS cameras being used in Town. During 2018, requests for video from the cameras were made 39 times. Of these, 31 were from law enforcement and 8 were public records requests. The single most frequent purpose was for documentation of motor vehicle crashes, but others included larceny, hit and runs, armed robbery, and assault and battery. Of the 39 requests, 28 were accommodated with videos. The other requests could not be accommodated because the camera did not capture the incident. No complaints were made regarding the usage of the cameras and all reports/logs were properly generated and maintained.

The reports noted that the camera usage was out of compliance with 2 different sets of policies. The first is the State's Municipal Retention Schedule for digital recordings, which requires that they be preserved for 1 month, whereas the Town was retaining the video footage for only 14 days. The duration of retention has now been changed to 30 days to ensure compliance. The second policy is the Town CIMS camera policy, which calls for the cameras to operate every day only between the hours of 10 PM – 6 AM. In practice, the cameras are operational 24 hours daily, a result of the replacement of the older cameras with new ones that lacked the capacity to utilize "privacy ensuring caps." A subcommittee member counted 29 of the 39 times that a request for camera footage was made was for a time outside of the permissible 10PM-6AM time period, indicating that the current policy should be reconsidered. It is assumed that this situation will be addressed by the newly formed Surveillance Technology & Military-Type Equipment Study Committee, chaired by Select Board Member Bernard Greene.

The issue of body cameras and cameras located on police cruisers was brought up again this year. Chief Lipson supports the use of such cameras and believes that many of the officers also support such camera usage. The issues that must be addressed for implementation are negotiating this change with the unions, and ensuring adequate funding is available. The main cost is not for the purchase of the cameras, but rather the cost of storage and management, which would need administrative staff to handle. The City of Boston is budgeting \$6 million for such purposes. It is expected that this issue also will be addressed by the Surveillance Committee.

It was noted that the use of fingerprints to solve crimes has declined from the prior year, despite use of the new more comprehensive system that can access countrywide data. Chief Lipson believes that the system is working well, but that other technologies are increasingly being used to solve crimes and can be more effective, such as DNA and surveillance equipment, such as cameras.

### *Community Drug Use*

The number of police calls for overdoses was reduced from 30 in 2017 to 21 in 2018, and there was only one fatality compared to 6 in the prior year. Chief Lipson attributes that reduction primarily to the more extensive use of Narcan. He believes that the drug abuse problem is still severe, however, noting that recently young people have increasingly been using liquid Molly.

### *Enhanced 911*

In most instances, all wireless calls made to 911 while the caller is located in Brookline will be connected to the Brookline police dispatcher. There are still some kinks in the system, particularly in border areas. For example, a call made on the Jamaicaway might be connected to Boston police or Brookline police or even the State Police, depending on where the closest cell tower is located.

Recently it has become possible to send texts via 911, though that too still some problems with implementation.

Given that there are times when wireless communications are not possible, it may be important to inform the public about the safety benefit of maintaining a landline for those circumstances. Chief Lipson considered the possibility of providing that information in the fact sheets distributed to students when they move into Brookline at the beginning of the school year.

### Recommendation

The Public Safety Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0 unanimously recommends a FY2020 appropriation of \$16,936,644 for the Police Department.

### Documents Reviewed and Cited at the Public Hearing

Town of Brookline, FY-2020 Financial Plan

<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18641/FY2020-Financial-Plan-Complete?bidId=>

Brookline Police Department 2018 Year End Review

<http://www.brooklinepolice.com/DocumentCenter/View/1083/2018-Year-End-Report-Final?bidId=>

CIMS 2018 Mid Year Audit Report

<http://www.brooklinepolice.com/DocumentCenter/View/1069/2018-Mid-Year-Audit-Report?bidId=>

CIMS 2018 End of Year Audit Report

<http://www.brooklinepolice.com/DocumentCenter/View/1070/2018-End-of-Year-Audit-Report?bidId=>