

Advisory Committee
Capital Subcommittee Report
of the **Brookline Recreation Department**
FY21 Budget FY21 Financial Plan: II 1-5; III 31-31; IV 95-104

The Capital Subcommittee of the Brookline Advisory Committee met at 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday March 3rd, 2020 in Room 308 of Town Hall. In attendance were: subcommittee members Carla Benka (Chair), Amy Hummel, Harry Friedman, Fred Levitan and John Doggett; Recreation Director Leigh Jackson, Recreation staff members Gerry Kelly (Business Manager), Mike Murphy (Golf Course Superintendent), and Jon Lewitus (Assistant Recreation Director); Park and Recreation Commissioners Nancy O'Connor, John Bain, Antonia Bellalta, Wendy Sheridan, and Dan Lyons; and Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff.

The mission of the Recreation Department is to enhance the quality of life through enriching experiences, which support the Brookline Community in developing and maintaining healthy life styles. The Recreation Department consists of three distinct segments, each of which has its own budget:

- The General Fund;
- The Recreation Revolving Fund, and;
- The Golf Course Enterprise Fund.

Director Leigh Jackson presented the department vision for FY21 with focus on serving all residents, to be the “Best” recreational program in the Northeast, by having a greater variety of creative, more age appropriate programs. The Department considers that they do a great job with children and needs to focus in the coming year to do a better job with 17-55 and up age groups. The Department plans to ‘elevate the brand’ and both enhance and refine the options presented to consumers. The Department has joined the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) certification program through the National Recreation and Park Association which provides for assessment and certification of the quality of the recreational programming. This will provide objective evidence of a claim to be the “Best” in the Northeast.

General Fund
IV-95

The General Fund has two categories or sub-programs: the Administration Sub-program which deals with the overall workings of the Department in accordance with the policies established by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Aquatics Sub-program which funds the operation of the Evelyn Kirrane Aquatics Center (but not the programs held at the Center). The FY21 budget request of \$1,147,697 for the General Fund represents about a 2.38% (\$26,714) increase from FY20. The component changes reflect increases of \$17,329 for personnel (contractual increases) and a

\$18,214 increase in utilities, the majority of which is related to the Center's three swimming pools.

Recreation Revolving Fund

IV-103

The Recreation Revolving Fund supports the activities that take place at Brookline's indoor and outdoor facilities including the Soule Center, Soule Gym, Jack Kirrane Skating Rink, Kirrane Aquatics Center, etc.

The 2020 Recreation Revolving Fund budget request of \$4,036,397 reflects a small increase of \$14,554 (0.36%) from FY20. The personnel increases (\$69,438 over FY20) reflect a new assistant aquatics director and additional part-time workers. These personnel additions have increased class capacity and reduced wait time for residents. Services have increased by \$34,108, largely due to new software expense to provide for a more customer oriented experience. Capital expenses have seen a major reduction (\$128,000 over FY20) since no new fleet additions are required this year.

Golf Enterprise Fund

IV-99/100

The 18-hole Robert T. Lynch Municipal Golf Course at Putterham Meadows is essentially a 'break-even' operation and, as such, generates the revenue that supports its operation. In addition, funds from the course, accounted for in the Golf Enterprise Fund, reimburse the General Fund for certain cost allocations, including fringe benefits. The revenue from the course comes primarily from rounds played, although the addition of the driving range has added significant revenue and helped increase overall demand for services and products including those at the Pro Shop.

The FY21 budget request is \$1,881,691, is a decrease of \$2,755, or 0.15%, lower than the budget for FY20. Primary drivers of the decrease include the reduction of part-time salaries which were added last year for a bad weather contingency that did not occur and a consequent lowering of intergovernmental transfers for personnel benefits (\$85,686).

The Director discussed with the Subcommittee the need for a master plan for the golf course as there is a general sense that utilization of the course could be improved and revenue increased. The market for golf across the country was observed to be flat and that other activities, focus on short game facilities, speeding up game time and whether or not the course should be 9 or 18 holes need to be reviewed and a master plan prepared to answer these and other questions. There was a general sense that the course, a great asset of the Town, should be providing more activities and programs and reaching into the community to provide more than just golf and a driving range.

Usage statistics, currently measured by "rounds of golf" were thought to be too vague. Committee members felt that, for example, measuring the number of unique users

would provide a better measure of resident usage to enable programs and activities that drive up utilization.

One item has arisen after the Subcommittee hearing which is that golf lessons were previously run off-budget and are now to be incorporated in the budget, as both a salary expense and corresponding revenue item. The Director estimates two pro golfers at a total of \$60,000 additional salary, offset with corresponding \$60,000 revenue item. This item was not discussed at the Hearing and will be offered as an amendment to the Subcommittee’s motion at the full AC meeting.

Cost Recovery and Scholarships

The Recreation Department has been taking steps to move towards full cost recovery, or as close to full cost recovery as is practicable. It will never be at 100% because of the costs of operating the swimming pool and the ice-skating rink, but, there has been some modest progress.

The Recreation Department is planning to achieve 80.5% cost recovery in FY21, detailed below.

The Department will not turn away any resident from participating in a program for financial reasons. A budget of \$135,000 is the estimated funding for financial assistance this year.

Cost Recovery

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	REQUEST
REVENUES	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
General Fund	64,000	64,000	84,000
Revolving Fund	3,296,917	3,067,585	4,036,397
Golf Enterprise Fund	1,512,005	1,722,098	1,881,692
TOTAL	4,872,922	4,853,683	6,002,089
EXPENDITURES			
General Fund	1,093,346	1,147,697	1,147,697
General Fund Benefits est. (current employees)	363,053	366,549	375,438
Revolving Fund	3,300,000	3,067,585	4,036,397
Golf Enterprise Fund	1,512,005	1,722,098	1,881,692
TOTAL	6,268,403	6,312,818	7,458,306
Cost Recovery	77.7%	76.9%	80.5%
General Fund Subsidy	22.3%	23.1%	19.5%

Financial Assistance

PROGRAM	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Soule Center	\$35,000
Soule Gym	\$300
Environmental Ed Center	\$2,000
Aquatic	\$5,700
Eliot	\$13,000
Tappan	\$1,000
Outdoor Rec	\$75,000
Outdoor Athletic	\$1,000
Offsite - Out of Town Trips	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$135,000



Capital Sub-Committee Recommendations

1. The Capital Subcommittee, voting 5-0-0, recommends favorable action on the request of \$1,147,697 for the FY 21 Recreation Department operating budget.
2. The Capital Subcommittee, voting 5-0-0 recommends approval of the following authorization:

The following sums, totaling \$1,881,691 shall be appropriated into the Golf Enterprise Fund, under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 44, section 53F ½, and may be expended

under the direction of the Park and Recreation Commission, for the operation of the Golf Course:

Personnel Expenses	\$ 669,557
Purchase of Services	\$ 254,901
Supplies	\$ 340,465
Other	\$ 36,500
Utilities	\$ 103,414
Capital	\$ 95,800
Debt Service	\$ 137,038
Interfund Transfer	\$ 213,997

Total Appropriations \$ 1,881,691

3. The Capital Subcommittee, voting 5-0-0 recommends approval of the following authorization: The Park and Recreation Commission is authorized to maintain and operate under the provisions of General Laws Ch. 44 Section 53E1/2, and Ch 79 of the Acts of 2005, a revolving fund for special recreation programs and events. All receipts from said programs and events shall be credited to the fund. Annual expenditures from the Fund shall not exceed \$4,036,397.