

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Public Safety Subcommittee

Report on FY20 Fire Department Operating Budget

The Public Safety Subcommittee held a public hearing on the FY20 Fire Department Operating Budget on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in Brookline Town Hall, Room 111. In attendance were Chief John Sullivan (Fire), Kevin Mascoll (Public Safety Business Office), Paul B. Trahon (Fire Union), Jim Clinton (Fire Union), Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis (Select Board's Office), Regina Frawley (TMM-16), and Public Safety Subcommittee members Alisa Jonas, David-Marc Goldstein, Susan Granoff and Janice Kahn (Chair).

Below is the report on the FY20 Fire Department Operating Budget
Proposed FY2020 Budget (See pp. IV-52-IV-56 of the *FY-2020 Financial Plan*)

	<u>Actual 2018</u>	<u>Budget 2019</u>	<u>Request 2020</u>	<u>\$Chnge</u>	<u>%Chnge</u>
Personnel	14,366,597	14,686,571	14,830,270	143,699	1.0%
Services	165,597	166,240	166,426	186	0.1%
Supplies	190,046	167,488	191,952	24,464	14.6%
Other	32,256	31,350	31,700	350	1.1%
Utilities	222,310	185,223	212,912	27,689	14.9%
Capital	121,181	347,471	270,662	(76,809)	-22.1%
TOTAL	15,097,987	15,584,343	15,703,922	119,579	0.8%
BENEFITS			10,635,006		
REVENUE	369,820	430,000	430,000	0%	0.0%

160 total FTEs.

Summary. The FY20 budget represents an increase of \$119,579 (0.8%), which was the same percentage increase as last year.

- Personnel increases 1.0% due to an increase in Steps of \$147,139 and \$14,310 for EMT pay. These increases are partially offset by a \$17,750 decrease in Longevity Pay.
- Services increase by only \$186 or 0.1%. Increases in rental/leases for equipment (\$1,500), Professional/Technical Services (\$10,000) and Wireless Communications (\$1,300). These increases are partially offset by Data Processing Equipment and maintenance (\$914) and Data Processing Software maintenance (\$5,700), and Public Safety and Motor Vehicle Equipment Repair (\$6,000).

- Supplies increases \$24,464 (14.6%) due to increases in General Supplies (\$15,000) and Uniforms and Protective Clothing (\$26,464). These increases are partially offset by decreases in Vehicle and Public Safety Supplies of \$17,000.
- Other increases \$350 for In-State Travel. The \$15,000 for Education/Training/Conferences shifts to a new line item, Reimbursements.
- Utilities increase \$27,689 or \$14.9% due to increases of \$32,458 for Electricity and Natural Gas, which are partially offset by decreases of \$4769 for Gasoline, Diesel and Water and Sewer.
- Capital decreases \$76,809 (22.1%) due to a decrease in Automobiles of \$100,725, partially offset by an increase of \$23,916 in Public Safety Equipment. Of note, included in this year's Capital Outlay is \$48,000 for Active Shooter Hostile Event Response Tactical Equipment, which had been requested last year as an expansion request. (See II-26 for Capital Outlay Summary)

Discussion:

The Public Safety Subcommittee welcomed Chief John Sullivan, who was hired as the Town's Fire Chief a little less than a year ago. Chief Sullivan noted that the biggest challenges he has identified relate to infrastructure, not operations of the Fire Department. There are new OSHA regulations as of February 1st which will require station repairs and safety upgrades. He noted that the apparatus rehab timetable has worked well. He is also working on a 5-Year Strategic Master Plan for the Brookline Fire Department (BFD) to maintain its accreditation. It includes identifying the BFD's mission and values, core competencies and infrastructure and operational needs, as well as projected population and road demands.

1. Maintenance and Training Facility (MTF). Chief Sullivan inherited a major \$4.2M construction project – the building of a new Maintenance and Training Facility at Fire Station 6 on Hammond Street, which is progressing on schedule - and is optimistically projected to be open by mid-May.
 - a. The foundation is in and it is now in the superstructure phase;
 - b. The newly-constructed burn building contains 4 rooms, 2 for training in fire suppression, 2 others for training in search and rescue operations, for instance. The burn rooms need to be “seasoned” and that is happening now;
 - c. The gas company is still insisting on an easement. The new facility equipment is configured for gas only, but it can use propane as a back-up. Because the facility needs a heat source for hot water, the facility can not be used until some form of heating system has been installed.
 - d. Fire Station 6 has also had some repair work done. The apparatus level floor has been reinforced and the existing training room in the basement of the station has been painted. Once the MTF is completed, trainings will move to that location. A side benefit is that the polling location for P15 will be moved to that safer location and not have to share the space with Engine 6.

2. Personnel

- a. Lieutenant Inspector in Fire Prevention. There are currently 154 firefighter positions, down from 155 a few years ago. Chief Sullivan would like to add a Lieutenant Inspector in the Fire Prevention sub-program and has asked for an expansion request of \$79,000 for that position. At one time there were 4 or 5 positions in Fire Prevention. Firefighters are required to inspect smoke detectors and CO detectors in homes when they are sold. Real estate brokers need the pre-fire analysis for the certificate of inspection from the FD to pass papers, often within a narrow window of time. The Department does about 500 inspections yearly. Currently there are 3 positions (including one clerk to process the permits) and the Chief estimates that there is an additional 2500 hours of inspection work that lacks the person-power to get done.

This is partly due to the fact that a fully-manned piece (4 man/min) of fire apparatus goes to all the inspections. By law, any residential property of 6 or more units needs front line firefighters to do the inspection, which ties up 4 firefighters who could be engaged in other job-related responsibilities, such as training. A lieutenant with a vehicle could more flexibly go to inspect single family homes, for instance, freeing up the apparatus and the person-power.

- b. Recruits. The FD is currently down 13 positions. Twelve candidates were offered provisional employment and 11 will be moving forward. These 11 recruits will be in the April training class, along with 13 other recruits in other nearby towns.
 - i. The State is changing from a 2-year civil service exam to a yearly exam which means that lists will be merged and the Town could get more candidates applying.
- c. Retirees. There are 5-6 firefighters who are eligible for retirement (are age-eligible and have served 32 years) and two will be leaving soon.

3. Training: Chief Sullivan explained that there are three levels of training:

- a. Recruit Basic Training, which the Department will be doing for the 11 new recruits, along with recruits from Dedham, Wellesley, Belmont and Walpole for a total of 24 recruits. Brookline is one of the few municipalities in the State to have in-house training, and to be a regional training facility, and is the smallest municipality to do so. (The others include Boston, Worcester and New Bedford.) With so few other municipalities providing such training, the demand for training is high, and as a regional training facility, we benefit from additional opportunities to receive federal training funds. The Chief noted that the Fire Academy has a back-log for training and so Brookline is well-positioned to do in-house and regional training.

Other communities provide instructors which may make some federal grant funding available for operational costs.)

- b. Developmental Training, which includes new techniques, innovations, new policies, new pieces of apparatus, 16 hours of HAZMAT refreshers, EMS and EMT refreshers. Currently approximately 120 firefighters are EMT-certified, and the Chief is building EMT training into the new recruit training curriculum. Fallon has been training 5 firefighters/year and will increase that to 10 in the current year. With this increased rate of EMT training, soon only the recruits will need to receive the training, which will be an improvement over the current situation, since already employed firefighters must take the training on their own time.
 - c. Proficiency Training. The \$200,000 expansion request for the Fire Department is for training at this level and would allow the BFD to bring in outside experts. It should be noted that while we are building a regional training center that will serve the ongoing in-house training needs of all of our firefighters, there is currently no line-item in the budget for training. Since there are so many areas of special expertise, the Town cannot provide training in all these areas in-house; part of the expansion request is to have funding to bring in outside trainers in those areas. The expansion funding will also be used to train our officers who will in turn provide more comprehensive in-house training.
4. One of the biggest budgetary concerns for the BFD has always been overtime costs. This is driven largely by:
- a. unfilled positions in combination with 4-person minimum manning on every piece of apparatus that leaves the station; and
 - b. a contractual requirement that 2 weeks of vacation time be taken during the summer months; and
 - c. excessive use of sick time.

Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis has provided a breakdown of leave tours quarterly (December separate) by type to better compare the yearly data from FY16 to FY19 since the data for FY19 is only for the first 7 months. Each firefighter works 2 tours (42 hours) per week.

Fire Department Leave Tours by Type										
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	(FY19-FY18) % Change
Sick	930	864	820	746	817	1,003	835	502	335	-33.3%
Vacation	960	1,060	982	975	1,001	964	962	979	616	-37.1%
A-Day	315	264	303	327	271	247	293	265	188	-29.1%
Injury	403	628	248	338	414	267	361	371	188	-49.3%
Other	141	95	48	56	133	129	160	337	151	-55.2%
TOTAL	2,769	2,911	2,401	2,442	2,636	2,610	2,611	2,454	1,478	-39.8%

	Sick				Vacation				A-Days				Injury				Other			
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
July - Sept	221	195	138	127	381	377	417	360	26	13	27	44	64	79	75	101	46	50	48	57
Oct - Nov	175	134	85	109	141	132	136	161	43	41	32	44	39	83	50	40	23	27	51	51
Dec	78	75	43	46	73	93	49	76	34	58	62	65	37	48	22	15	13	7	39	24
Jan - Apr	355	305	173	53	189	192	188	19	113	157	119	35	88	122	144	32	27	31	135	19
May - June	173	125	63	0	180	168	189	0	31	23	25	0	39	28	80	0	30	45	64	0
TOTAL	1,003	835	502	335	964	962	979	616	247	293	265	188	267	361	371	188	129	160	337	151

	Sick		Vacation		A-Days		Injury		Other											
	FY19 vs FY17	FY19 vs FY18	FY19 vs FY17	FY19 vs FY18	FY19 vs FY17	FY19 vs FY18	FY19 vs FY17	FY19 vs FY18	FY19 vs FY17	FY19 vs FY18										
July - Sept	(68)	-35%	(11)	-8.0%	(17)	-4.5%	(57)	-13.7%	31	238.5%	17	63.0%	22	27.8%	26	34.7%	7	14.0%	9	18.8%
Oct - Nov	(25)	-19%	24	28.2%	29	22.0%	25	18.4%	3	7.3%	12	37.5%	(43)	-51.8%	(10)	-20.0%	24	88.9%	0	0.0%
Dec	(25)	-39%	3	7.0%	(17)	-18.3%	27	55.1%	6	10.2%	3	4.8%	(34)	-65.4%	(7)	-31.8%	17	242.5%	(15)	-38.5%
Jan - Apr	(253)	-83%	(20)	-59.4%	(173)	-90.1%	(169)	-89.9%	(122)	-77.5%	(84)	-70.6%	(90)	-73.5%	(112)	-77.5%	(12)	-33.7%	(116)	-85.5%
May - June	(125)	-100%	(63)	-100.0%	(168)	-100.0%	(189)	-100.0%	(23)	-100.0%	(25)	-100.0%	(28)	-100.0%	(80)	-100.0%	(64)	-100.0%	(64)	-100.0%
TOTAL	(500)	-60%	(167)	-33.3%	(346)	-36.0%	(363)	-37.1%	(105)	-35.8%	(77)	-29.1%	(113)	-47.5%	(183)	-49.3%	(9)	-5.6%	(188)	-55.2%

One of the quick takeaways from this chart is that comparing FY19 to FYs 16, 17 and 18 in many categories, and particularly sick time and vacation time, in the period July through December leave tours are down. One area that is seeing an increase is A-Days (away or personal days) and this may be a result of a recent contract that now allows firefighters to take personal days as wanted without first needing to get approval from the Chief. It may also be a factor in the decrease in Sick Days.

A second chart breaks this down for the first 7 months of FY19 and shows that at this point in the year 33.2% of the overtime is caused by sick leave; vacation leave remains the larger driver of overtime costs. That chart follows:

FY19 LEAVE TOTALS

	SICK	VAC	A-DAY	INJURY	OTHER	TOTAL	TOTAL	OT	DAYS WITH	NO OT	1 OT	2 OT	3 OT	>3 OT
							OT	CAUSED BY SICK LEAVE						
JULY	25	145	11	52	28	253	142	24	1	4	7	1	18	
AUGUST	51	145	11	28	17	252	158	58	0	1	2	5	23	
SEPTEMBER	51	70	22	21	28	184	92	44	4	5	7	3	12	
OCTOBER	51	76	14	24	22	187	148	58	2	3	6	4	16	
NOVEMBER	58	85	38	16	29	218	161	55	1	2	1	3	23	
DECEMBER	46	76	65	15	24	226	135	44	3	0	3	6	19	
JANUARY	53	19	35	32	19	158	98	35	9	3	4	5	10	
FEBRUARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	
MARCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	
APRIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	
MAY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	
JUNE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	
	335	616	188	188	151	1,478	910	382	172	18	36	27	121	

OT caused by Sick = 33.2%

TO DATE		PROJECTED ANNUAL	
SICK LEAVE	335	SICK LEAVE	621
VACATION	616	VACATION	831
PERSONAL DAYS	188	PERSONAL DAYS	252
INJURY LEAVE	188	INJURY LEAVE	232
OTHER LEAVE	151	OTHER LEAVE	195
TOTAL LEAVE	1,478	TOTAL LEAVE	2,131
OVERTIME	910	OVERTIME	1,262
OVERTIME CAUSED BY SICK LEAVE	382	OVERTIME CAUSED BY SICK LEAVE	524

5. Firefighter Health and Wellness. In recent years more attention is being paid to mitigating the occupational health risks associated with the job. They face heat, flames, physical and mental stress, high levels of carbon monoxide. They are at greater risk of certain cancers, heart disease, respiratory illnesses and stress. In Brookline, we have installed washers and dryers in every station, firefighters are equipped with two sets of gear and the stations are divided into red and green zones (contaminated/uncontaminated areas as best we can). The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is pressing for regular occupational health screenings. This is not just a regular health exam, but one that specifically does pre-screenings for the health risks firefighters face. This means educating doctors on these job-related health risks. The union would also like firefighters to have full body scans for early detection of health problems. The Town currently also is undergoing a Decontamination Study, whereby an outside consultant will evaluate the most appropriate methods for proper decontamination techniques in the fire stations. While firefighters are already doing decontamination prior to returning to their station following a fire, these measures are relatively useless if there is no means to perform proper decontamination at the stations.

6. Community Outreach to Seniors. The BFD has received SAFE grants specifically for safety initiatives for seniors and Chief Sullivan would like to be able to dedicate a member of the department to a senior risk reduction program. Firefighters who go to a multi-unit building have digital floor plans of that building that they can access, but they don't know if that building has a disabled person living there. There was some discussion of how to subtly mark a mailbox, for instance, to identify an at-risk person. Floor buddies was another strategy. Chief Sullivan said that he would welcome more current information about which Brookline seniors and other residents have mobility issues. One problem that the BFD has is that much of the information on this subject that it has received in the past is now out of date and possibly inaccurate and not useful.

7. The subcommittee also discussed how the Department is dealing with issues of racial climate and diversity. An organization climate assessment survey was done in 2015, which led to the diversity training. The Department has worked with both HR on diversity training and with Dr. Lloyd Gellineau. The Professional development and training budget includes diversity training for firefighters. It would be helpful to have a new HR Director in place to work with the BFD.

By a vote of 4-0-0 the Public Safety Subcommittee unanimously recommends a FY20 Fire Department Operating Budget of \$15,703,922.