

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Administration and Finance Subcommittee  
**Report on FY2022 Town Clerk Budget**

The Administration and Finance and Capital Subcommittees held a virtual public hearing on Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to review the Town Clerk budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) request. In attendance were Harry Bohrs, Neil Gordon, and Dennis Doughty for A&F; Carla Benka, John Doggett, Harry Friedman, Amy Hummel, Carol Levin, and Pam Lodish for Capital; Jeff Nutting, Town Clerk's office; Chris Tisbert, Administrative Assistant; Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Justin Cassanova-Davis, Assistant Town Administrator; and Mark Levy.

The proposed operating budget information appears in section 4G, pp. 4.30 to 4.33 in the FY-2022 Financial Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

By a vote of 3-0-0, the Administration & Finance Subcommittee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on the Town Clerk budget request of \$617,240.

By vote of 6-0-0, the Capital Subcommittee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on the Town Clerk's CIP request of \$130,000.

**Discussion**

The proposed 2022 budget shows a decrease of \$142,665 (23%) from the FY21 budget. This is almost entirely due to regular variation in the number of elections expected to be held in FY22, which results in a predictable reduction in Temporary Full Time work (election staff) and Meals (for election staff). Other salaries are essentially level funded, with a small steps increase somewhat offset by a small longevity decrease. All other expenses are level funded.

The Clerk's office enters FY22 with more unknowns than in prior years, including:

- There will be a new Clerk (either elected or appointed, depending on the outcome of a May 2021 ballot question) and there appears to be a lot of deferred organizational work to catch up on
- There will likely be redistricting after the US Census is finalized
- The State is considering new rules around mail-in voting
- The Bylaws require updating. (The last update of the official printed document dates to 2018.) This update is required prior to the digitization effort.
- There is the possibility of currently unanticipated election(s).

There are likely to be costs associated with each of these. The current expectation is that the work will be absorbed by the budget, but there is the possibility of a Reserve Fund transfer request for the Town Clerk (a certainty if an additional election is required). The Bylaw digitization effort — moving the bylaws into the General Code platform — is not budgeted for FY22 due to its dependence on first integrating all of the changes from the

past several years into a single master. This is a disappointment to the Subcommittee, which recommends that immediate steps be taken to educate the public (possibly via an online index of changes) as to how the most up-to-date documents can be located online.

The Clerk's office plans a complete upgrade of voting equipment in FY22. The existing hardware is 20 years old and had an expected lifetime of 10 years when originally purchased. The CIP request of \$130,000 covers new hardware and software. The request includes 22 tabulator machines (one tabulator per precinct plus backups), reporting software and hardware, training, testing, and onsite coverage for the first election. (The State is responsible for replacing the AutoMARK Voter Assist terminals for voters with special needs.) It is possible that the Town will receive a very modest credit for the old equipment but that is not certain at this time. It is expected that the new equipment will have a useful life of 10-12 years. Post-purchase maintenance and software licensing fees total \$5,250.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the potential impact of Ranked Choice Voting on the hardware selection process; the subcommittees were satisfied that the range of possible outcomes can adequately be satisfied by the hardware platform to be acquired.