

TOWN OF BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Personnel Subcommittee Report
Human Resources Department: FY23 Budget:
Public Hearing: March 14, 2022

Attendance: Ann Braga (HR Dir.), Justin Casanova-Davis, Christine Westphal, Harry Friedman Harry Bohrs, Neil Gordon, Perry Grossman, Katherine Florio, Jennifer Stallion, Leslea Noble
Recommendation: The subcommittee voted to approve the budget of \$607,890 by a unanimous vote of 3-0-0.

Executive Summary:	This budget of \$607,890 represents an increase of \$3,695 which represents a salary adjustment to reflect increased responsibility on the part of one employee. https://stories.opengov.com/15MmxC1Vp/published/undefined
Voting Yes will...	Approve the departmental budget request as proposed by the Town Administrator. This budget shows a small increase from last year.
Voting No will...	Reject the budget/priorities as proposed, and open the door for different approaches
Financial impact [if any]	"The Department is responsible for assisting all town departments with the recruitment and selection of new employees, while ensuring compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws that govern this process."
Legal implications [if any]	"The Department also maintains a classification and compensation system for all positions; provides training to Department Heads and employees on important employment issues; negotiates and administers labor contracts; administers group health and life insurance, worker's compensation, public safety injured on duty, and unemployment compensation; administers the CDL Alcohol and Drug Testing Program; and monitors and administers employee leave, other human resources programs and benefits"

Human Resources Overview

Department is fully staffed with 7 employees (6.8 FTE). It has experienced a number of pandemic related challenges which were successfully handled with the current staff. Important ongoing projects are developing work from home (WFH) policies that will make the pilot program instituted during the pandemic a permanent option for appropriate employees. Consulting with CDICR as citizen complaint procedures are adopted. Continued work and consultation on the Town's equity and inclusion processes. Working in conjunction with the Town Counsel's Office on Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Discussion

There was a discussion about the development of the work from home policies. Working with the Town Administrator the Department determined that approximate 200 employees could work from home on a part time basis. Work from home is limited to 3 days, with the supervisor's approval. Approximately 120 employees are participating in the program at this time and it is anticipated that the existence of the program will aide in both recruitment and retention of

employees. Within the Planning Department this has translated into workspace sharing. This also permitted a Payroll Coordinator to continue working for the Town.

There was also a discussion about the Collective Bargaining in Town. The AFSCME contract should be ready for a Town Meeting vote at the Spring Town Meeting. Other Collective Bargaining agreements will probably not be ready before Fall Town Meeting. There was a brief discussion of the police contract and the implementation of body camera use by the police force. Compensation for the agreement to wear body cameras is subject to negotiation in this contract. There was also a general discussion about potential cost of living increases in the upcoming contracts since inflation seems to be raising rapidly and is of concern.

We discussed the need for a comprehensive salary survey to determine if the salaries the Town is offering are sufficient to recruit the personnel we need to keep the Town services running smoothly. Salaries have been an issue for the Building Department, where we have experienced significant difficulty hiring some trades. While a comprehensive survey might help with hiring we would need to be prepared to raise salaries if it is determined that we are below the current market for a significant segment of our workforce.

The Human Resources Department touches every department and affects every employee at some point and some level. This requires staff to interact both broadly and deeply.

Recommendation

By a vote of 3-0-0, the Personnel Subcommittee of the Brookline Advisory Committee recommends ACTION on the budget as presented

Hearing Recording:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/h0D6S4wlsVu550btFu6euDH00jXi4lVpqKZethyuueyH3eicF4P8qv-sk_-ThqrY.tKX3QIAZN8inEh8T

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FY23 Budget Line Item Report

Collapse All	FY21 Actuals	FY22 Budget	FY23 Budget	Variance
▼ SALARIES	\$ 327,830	\$ 321,796	\$ 325,491	\$ 3,695
PERMANENT FULL TIME	317,766	494,294	500,309	6,015
PERMANENT PART TIME	0	43,125	43,125	0
LONGEVITY PAY	1,250	1,250	1,250	0
EXTRA COMPENSATION	162	0	0	0
VACATION BUYOUT	2,496	0	0	0
A DAY BUYOUT	6,156	0	0	0
CLOTHING-UNIFORM ALLOWANCE	0	550	550	0
OFFSET	0	-217,423	-219,743	-2,320
▼ SERVICES	211,200	239,359	239,359	0
OFFICE EQUIP R & M	389	500	500	0
OFFICE EQUIP RENTALS/LEAS	2,400	2,159	2,159	0
PROFESSIONAL/TECH SERVICE	3,451	22,500	22,500	0
LEGAL SERVICES	181,938	157,500	157,500	0
CDL DRUG TESTING	4,160	6,000	6,000	0
PREPLACEMENT-MEDICAL	8,991	35,700	35,700	0
WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS	1,023	700	700	0
POSTAGE	0	200	200	0
DELIVERY SERVICES	55	400	400	0
ADVERTISING SERVICES	8,575	13,300	13,300	0
SUBSCRIPTIONS	219	400	400	0
▼ SUPPLIES	28,291	14,900	14,900	0
OFFICE SUPPLIES	1,665	3,700	3,700	0
DATA PROCESSING SOFTWARE	26,626	11,200	11,200	0
▼ OTHER	4,320	26,500	26,500	0
EDUCATION/TRAINING/CONFERENCES	3,995	25,500	25,500	0
PROFESSIONAL DUES/MEMBERS	325	1,000	1,000	0
▼ BUDGETED CAPITAL	1,236	1,640	1,640	0
LEASED COMPUTER EQUIPMENT	1,236	1,640	1,640	0
Total	\$ 572,877	\$ 604,195	\$ 607,890	\$ 3,695

Data filtered by EXPENSES, HUMAN RESOURCES and exported on March 16, 2022. Created with OpenGov

TOWN OF BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Personnel Subcommittee Report
Personnel Benefits: FY23 Budget:
Public Hearing: March 14, 2022

Attendance: Ann Braga (HR Dir.), Justin Casanova-Davis, Christine Westphal, Harry Friedman Harry Bohrs, Neil Gordon, Perry Grossman, Katherine Florio, Jennifer Stallion, Leslea Noble
Recommendation: The subcommittee voted to approve the budget of \$75,350,740 by a unanimous vote of 3-0-0.

Executive Summary:	Personnel Benefits total \$75,350,740 and compromise nearly 25% of the operating budget. They include pensions, group health insurance, employee assistance programs, group life insurance, disability insurance, worker’s compensation, the public safety Injured on Duty (IOD) medical expenses trust fund and unemployment compensation. The health insurance rates are set by the GIC and the final number has not been included in this budget request, which may cause the total to increase. The increase for the next year is \$3,795,947.
Voting Yes will...	Approve the Personnel Benefits budget request as proposed by the Town Administrator.
Voting No will...	Reject the budget/priorities as proposed, and open the door for different approaches
Financial impact [if any]	This budget represents a significant part of the operating budget. Most of the benefits represent both previous commitments that have been made by the Town (pension and health benefits for retired employees) and benefit required by law (unemployment, workers compensation).
Legal implications [if any]	As noted above, the vast majority of these benefits are either required by law or represent previous commitments that the Town has made to its employees

Overview

The Town has a substantial unfunded pension obligation, which we are on schedule to fully fund by 2030. The Towns pension fund is under the control of Retirement Board and the Retirement Board sets the rate of return, which directly impacts the Towns contribution need to achieve full funding. The current rate of return is set at 7.2%. There has been discussion of reducing this assumed rate of return by the Retirement Board, under whose domain this falls. Market returns, of course, fluctuate, and assuming a certain rate of return allows for a measure of “smoothing” in the funding schedule calculation.

The pandemic depleted the unemployment fund in 2021 and this budget replenishes that fund. Contribution to the Public Safety IOD fund in FY23 budget to replenish the fund. There was a balance of over \$1M two fiscal years ago and now it is around \$600K.

The GIC is set to increase health care costs which will increase this budget when the numbers are finalized before Town Meeting. The expected increase is 6.6%, or perhaps a little more. Under the agreements that the Town made when they joined the GIC the Town pays 83% of the health insurance costs for both current and retired employees. Group Health Insurance accounts for nearly 11% of our Operating Budget.

Discussion

There was a discussion of the overall costs for benefits. The current plan is to shift most of the contribution we are making to the pension fund to the fund the Post-Retirement Benefits Trust Fund (OPEB's) after 2030 in order to meet those obligations. Brookline is one of only a few municipalities in the Commonwealth with a structured, disciplined approach to meeting and funding its post retirement obligations.

Health Insurance costs are significant, and while there have been some changes in the plans available under the GIC, it is anticipated that these costs will continue to increase. The rate of increase in healthcare premium costs outpaces the rate at which we can increase revenue.

We also discussed the long term disability options that employees have. These are mostly applicable to Department Heads and other employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements.

Recommendation

By a vote of 3-0-0, the Personnel Subcommittee of the Brookline Advisory Committee recommends positive ACTION on the budget as presented

Hearing Recording:

<https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/h0D6S4wlsVu550btFu6euDH00jXi4IVpqKZethyuueyH3eicF4P8qv-sk-ThqrY.tKX3QIAZN8inEh8T>

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