

Advisory Committee
 Public Safety Subcommittee
 FY24 Fire Department Budget
 Public Hearing Held via Zoom 9 March 2023

Attendance:

Janice Kahn, Subcommittee Chair; Subcommittee members Donelle O’Neal, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, and Alisa Jonas; Brookline Fire Department Chief John Sullivan; Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; John VanScoyoc, Select Board Vice Chair; Patricia Cripe, FF, Vice President, Brookline Firefighters Local 950; Brian Bergeron, FF, Treasurer of Brookline Firefighters Local 950; Kristine Knauf, Pct. 15 TMM; Bonnie Bastien, Pct. 5 TMM; Perry Grossman, Pct. 5 TMM.

Hearing Recording:

Click on the link below.

<https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/Tb3PDMRhDrgUur3JEAF4xevZXnjKmP2U7kCF1rRjModtlBCer5OH9cIgL67PrnTX.dPUeGLIdzr8GbiPy?pwd=JYz6g0WzTcu0rRhcNZgZpohqTMG1dYi7>

Access Passcode: =wb08d.R

Recommendation:

The subcommittee unanimously recommended favorable action on the Fire Department FY24 operating budget request of **\$16,848,102.**

Data			
Expand All	FY22 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
▶ SALARIES	\$ 17,537,735	\$ 16,051,413	\$ 16,048,002
▶ SERVICES	135,007	168,426	168,426
▶ SUPPLIES	191,461	126,952	121,952
▶ OTHER	18,046	27,100	27,100
▶ UTILITIES	208,677	251,970	227,270
▶ BUDGETED CAPITAL	43,515	255,796	255,352
Total	\$ 18,134,442	\$ 16,881,657	\$ 16,848,102

For further details on the Fire Department budget, see Section 4J, pages 67-75 of the Brookline FY-2024 Financial Plan, and online at

<https://stories.opengov.com/brooklinema/published/AhrinmUIU0N>

Introduction:

The Fire Department budget funds 6 Sub-programs: Administration, Suppression, Prevention, Equipment Maintenance, Training and Emergency Management. The Department's proposed FY24 budget of \$16,848,102 is a reduction of \$33,555 from the FY23 budget.

Discussion:

Personnel and Overtime

The full complement of 161 FTEs is funded in the budget. There are minimum required staffing levels, and vacancies, vacations, and injuries are causing stress in the overtime budget. For FY23, the department is currently running an approximate deficit of \$541,000 in its overtime budget, which will have to be reconciled by the end of the fiscal year.

The 161 FTEs include 154 uniformed personnel, 5 civilians, and funding for 2 positions in the PSBO (Public Safety Business Office).

The department currently has one vacancy and anticipates 4 more in FY24. The Chief noted that currently there are 18 members out IOD (injured on duty), which drives up overtime costs. The average department IOD was 12-13 over the past two years. 4 employees have exceeded or are approaching the 2-year mark since injury, 3 employees are approaching the 1-year mark since injury, and 10 are within 6-months from their injury. The Chief mentioned that some of the reasons OT is so high is "an inability to quickly and efficiently move employees through to the retirement process, inability to accelerate treatment or surgical interventions with providers, and contractual restrictions (collective bargaining) with regard to modified duty".

The Fire Department has responded to an increasing number of calls in recent years, rising from 8,201 in 2017 to 9,134 in 2022.

Training

There has been much discussion regarding the best way to train recruits. Recruits can go through the State Academy, which is free (however, there is currently an 8 month backlog), or be trained by the Town, which picks up the expense. The recently completed maintenance/ training facility at Station 6 was recently used by the City of Cambridge to train some new recruits, and Brookline was able to have some recruits added to the classes for free. Cambridge has expressed interest in using it again in the future.

Health of Firefighters

Firefighters face increased risks of cancers from the job, and there are increased efforts to minimize the exposures. It includes exhaust from fire trucks, which then flow into the living areas of stations, and of course fires today burn hotter and faster, and release toxins thanks in part to societies' increased use of plastics, flame retardants, rechargeable batteries, etc. The Union is working with OSHA to compile statistics on cancer rates. Firefighters are given 2 sets of clothing, each station now has working washing machines, and each station has been divided into zones which seeks to limit contaminated gear, etc. from contaminating station living areas. This is one of the drivers of the station renovations. Improving air quality in stations is also a key part of the renovations.

There is also a new recognition of the dangers of PFAS. For example, there are more electric cars on the road. When those vehicles catch on fire, Firefighters need to use foam instead of water to stop the battery fire. That foam contains PFAS and causes health problems. The department is trying to minimize the use of foam and is looking for a greener alternative.

It is now known that the chemical used to waterproof the turnout gear that Firefighters use everyday also contains PFAS. The Chief has instituted a new policy that allows Firefighters to forgo wearing the turnout gear in situations that don't need it (medical calls, etc.), reducing their exposure.

Increased Calls

Brookline's population growth, which brings more development, such as the expansion of Hancock Village, as well as new, larger, denser housing in North Brookline, has put pressure on the department. The Chief would like to see an additional ladder company to cover South Brookline. During the station renovations, the Chief will be transferring equipment among various stations, including Stations 4 and 6 (Hammond St.).

The Town has a new contract with Coastal Medical (which replaces Fallon) to supply 2 Advanced Life Support ambulances. Currently, the vehicles are assigned to Stations 7 and 4. The one at Station 4 will be permanently moved to Station 6 on Hammond St. Thanks to the new contract, the Town now has a 3rd ambulance for Basic Life Support during peak hours (10 AM-6 PM), which isn't assigned to a station.

Renovations of Fire Stations

The debt exclusion to renovate the Town's antiquated fire stations passed easily at the November 2022 election. The estimated cost is around \$60-65 million dollars and the renovations will be net-zero. The project will be done in stages over several years. First up will be the renovation of Station 4 on Boylston St., then Station 1 in the Village. The project will also include the complete replacement (onsite) of Station 5 on Babcock St.

The Town has received bids from 3 potential vendors and hopes to begin the first project in fall or winter of this year.

VOTE:

Note: the subcommittee did not have the details of a \$5,000 addback for the department (which would add back money taken from various supply line items should the upcoming operational override pass), so we did not vote on it.

By a unanimous vote, the Public Safety Subcommittee recommends favorable action on the Brookline Fire Department's base FY24 Operating Budget of **\$16,848,102**.

Janice Kahn, Chair
Alisa Jonas
Donelle O'Neal
David-Marc Goldstein
Neil Gordon

PERFORMANCE / WORKLOAD INDICATORS

	ACTUAL FY2021	ESTIMATE FY2022	ACTUAL FY2022	ESTIMATE FY2023	ESTIMATE FY2024
Box Alarms	388	400	319	400	400
Still Alarms	3,602	3,700	4,481	4,500	3,700
Medical Emergencies	3,797	4,000	4,227	4,000	4,000
Total Responses	7,862	8,500	9,089	9,000	9,300
Avg Response Time to Emergency Incidents (minutes) - Calendar Year	<4:00	<4:00	<4:00	<4:00	<4:00
Incidents of building fires	16	35	32	35	35
Large loss fire (over \$100,000)	3	4	4	4	4
Medium Loss Fires (under \$100,000)	13	30	28	30	30
Multiple Alarm Fires	3	5	4	5	5
Mutual Aid responses	69	75	46	65	65
% of Investigations Started Within Two Hours	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Apartment Buildings with 6+ Units Inspected	540	541	541	541	541
26F Smoke/CO Detector Inspections	886	800	800	800	800
Lodging House Inspections	49	49	49	49	49
Common Victualer Inspections	135	140	160	155	155
Certificates of occupancy	107*	170	123	130	130
All Other Inspections (Fire Alarm sprinklers, building plan reviews)	677	700	700	700	700

* Anticipated loss due to pandemic

PERFORMANCE / WORKLOAD INDICATORS (con't.)					
	ACTUAL FY2021	ESTIMATE FY2022	ACTUAL FY2022	ESTIMATE FY2023	ESTIMATE FY2024
% of Apparatus Repairs Initiated within 24 Hrs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of Apparatus Receiving Preventive Maintenance Twice per Year	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of EMTs Requesting Re-certification Re-Certified	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of Newly Certified EMTs	7	5	3	15	4
Number of Firefighters Completing: **					
Firefighter I/II certification	0	0	0	15	4
Instructor Certification I	17	3	3	0	0
Instructor Certification II	0	3	3	0	0
Incident Safety Officer	0	3	0	0	0
Technical Rescue	0	0	0	0	0
Hazardous Material Techs	0	0	0	0	0
Live Fire Training Techs	0	2	0	0	0
Company Officer I	0	0	0	0	0
% of Fires Contained to the Building of Origin	100%	95%	100%	95+%	95+%
Number of Pre-K through Grade 2 classrooms receiving the S.A.F.E. Program	96***	96	96	96	96
** Certification classes cancelled by DFS in March 2020 - pushed to FY 21 and FY 22					
*** SAFE program delivered virtually in FY 2021					