

Lisa Portscher

From: Lynn-Jones, Sean M. <sean_lynn-jones@hks.harvard.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2023 12:26 PM
To: Susan
Cc: Lisa Portscher
Subject: March 20 6:00 p.m. Advisory Committee Human Services Subcommittee Public Hearing on Health Department Budget
Attachments: 2022.10.12 Rodent Control Action Plan Recommendation Memorandum.pdf

Dear Susan,

I plan to attend the Human Services Subcommittee's March 20 public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the Health Department.

I am writing to urge the subcommittee to ensure that Brookline spends a sufficient amount on rodent control. Some rodent control funding is included in the Health Department budget. (Other rodent control funding is in the budget for the DPW, which collects trash and enforces sanitation regulations. In addition, the ARPA request for FY2024 and the DPW CIP for FY2025 and subsequent years include funds for installation of new rodent-resistant "Big Belly" trash receptacles in parks and public spaces.)

There is still some uncertainty about what might be included in an operating override to be placed on the May 2023 ballot. Thus, details of funding for rodent control and trash management—including funding in the Health Department budget—remain unclear.

In his February 14 presentation to the Select Board and Advisory Committee, Town Administrator Carey said that the override would include \$226,000 for the Rodent Control action Plan (RCAP) and that these funds would be used to continue the contracts for the pest control and food safety consultants who were hired in the initial phase of the RCAP, but he suggested that this plan was not definite. It was not clear at that time if there was enough data to justify continuing to retain the consultant to place traps.

In this March 14 presentation to the Select Board (see below), Town Administrator Carey said that the \$226,000 in the override for RCAP would provide for three FTEs. He did not mention the consultants. I believe two of the FTEs would be in DPW, including one that would be funded by the increase in the trash fee. The third might be in the Health Department.

Key questions regarding the Health Department's FY 2024 budget include:

- What does the department's base (non-override) budget include for rodent control?
- What does the override include for Health Department funding for rodent control?
- Will any override funds be devoted to the pest control and food safety consultants?
- Have the pest control and food safety consultants generated any important data that the Town can use to control rodents more effectively?

I hope that these issues and questions will be addressed at the subcommittee hearing. My strong preference would be for full funding of all elements of the RCAP as listed in the attached memo.

I urge the subcommittee to determine if the Health Department budget includes key elements of the attached RCAP. See, in particular, the last page of the attached document.

Here is what I think we know about what the Town is doing to fund the RCAP:

- The operating override to be placed on the May 2023 ballot includes \$226,00 for three RCAP-related FTEs. One of those FTEs, apparently funded by revenue from an increase in the trash fee and in DPW, would be a Code Enforcement and Inspectional Services Manager—a “very important position” as described by Commissioner Erin Gallentine during the January 31 Select Board meeting. This staff person would “help control waste storage problems that are a significant contributing factor to the rodent population.” (The RCAP includes hiring an “Inspectional Services and Code Enforcement Supervisor.”)
- The Town will ask the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee to provide \$150,000 for trash receptacle replacement as part of the RCAP.
- The CIP for FY2025 and subsequent years includes funds for trash receptacle acquisition/replacement.
- The Town will ask the ARPA Committee to fund an electric packer [truck], an item that might be meant to be part of the RCAP, which includes acquisition of a “Small Trash Packer with Toter Lift.” The ARPA request does not identify this electric packer as part of the RCAP.
- One of the FTEs in the May 2023 override would be an operator for a packer [truck].

Best wishes,

Sean M. Lynn-Jones
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 1

Dept	Item	Override	Yr
RESTORING PRIOR CAPACITY			
<i>(multiple)</i>	Budget Restoration (1 FTE FY26)	\$625,000	
DPW	Fleet & Equipment Replacement/Maintenance	\$225,000	
CLOSING THE COMMUNITY UPKEEP GAP			
DPW	Streetscape Transformation	\$2,100,000	
<i>(multiple)</i>	Rodent Control Action Plan (3 FTE)	\$226,000	
BLD	Town Facilities Deferred Maintenance	\$200,000	
SPENDING NOW TO SAVE LATER			
BLD	Departmental Reorganization (1 FTE + Sals)	\$235,000	
DPCD	Increased Long-Term Planning Capacity	\$223,000	
DPW	Urban Forestry Management (3 FTE FY25)	\$155,000	
RECRUITING AND RETAINING TOP-LEVEL STAFF			
<i>(multiple)</i>	Salary Study Changes	\$500,000	
<i>(multiple)</i>	Increased Benefit Costs	\$200,000	
<i>(multiple)</i>	Absorbing HCA-Funded Positions (2.5 FTE FY26)	\$35,000	
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ASSISTANCE			
COA	Age-Friendly Services and Programs (.5 FTE)	\$100,000	
ODICR	Language Access (1 FTE)	\$100,000	
DPH	Farmers' Market Coupon Program	\$50,000	
DPH	Community Gatekeepers Program	\$15,000	
ODICR	Welcome to Brookline Program	\$6,000	
BASE TOTAL:		\$4,995,000.00	
REC	LMI Scholarships (incl. staff & transit)	\$1,000,000	
DPW	Composting (\$75 opt-in fee)	\$1,850,000	
GRAND TOTALS:		\$7,845,000.00	