

**Advisory Committee - Administration and Finance Subcommittee**  
**Information Technology FY24 Budget**  
**Public Hearing: March 22, 2023**

**Attendance:** Feng Yang, CIO, Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Kelly Hardebeck, Subcommittee chair, Subcommittee members: Harry Bohrs, Neil Gordon and Joslin Murphy

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**Recommendation:** The Administration and Finance Subcommittee by a vote of 4-0-0 unanimously recommends favorable action on the Information Technology base budget of \$2,350,179 and the override budget of \$2,375,179

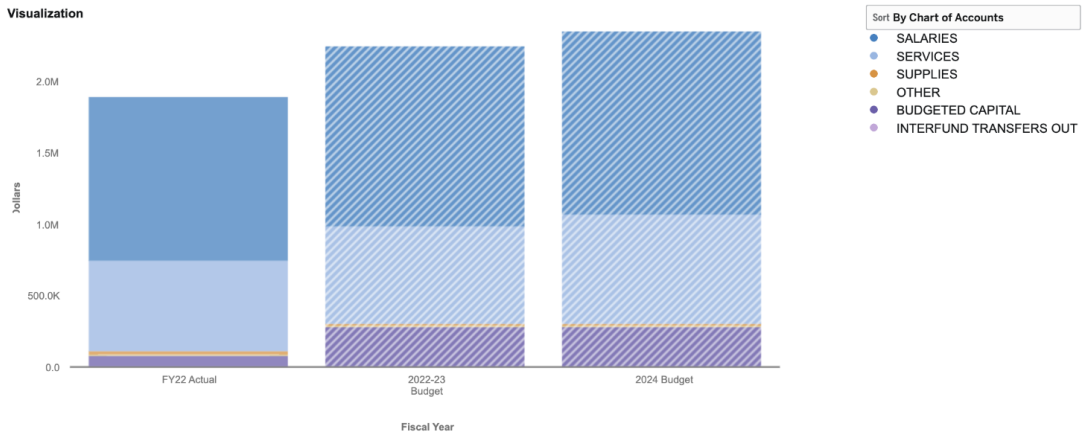
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**Hearing Recording:** Click on the link below and enter the passcode when prompted to view the recording.

[https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/zDQC6bY8Vavo9M-oPA41P\\_yiE-7zKr28IF7O3DTqJ-B6Fw5pG4vfRMgjJbp9PF.BJdxOtgM8wtXdhHN](https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/zDQC6bY8Vavo9M-oPA41P_yiE-7zKr28IF7O3DTqJ-B6Fw5pG4vfRMgjJbp9PF.BJdxOtgM8wtXdhHN)

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**FY24 Budget Line Item Report**



**Discussion:** Feng Yang, CIO, presented the IT Department’s proposed FY24 budget and FY23 accomplishments to the subcommittee during its public hearing on March 22, 2023. (See attached presentation for details)

The proposed FY24 budget is a modest 4% increase over FY23 and the base budget reduces the department’s General Consulting line item by \$25,000. This item was chosen for reduction because it turned back a surplus in FY22 and is restored to its FY23 level (\$40K) in the proposed FY24 override budget.

The IT department is responsible for managing the Town’s large and growing digital landscape that includes 54 physical locations, more than 1K Apple, Chrome and Windows devices, and more than 100 enterprise and departmental applications. IT is responsible for maintaining high-speed connectivity and network redundancy and over 58,000 endpoints. Since the pandemic, the scope of the IT Department has expanded as the Town’s digital transformation has accelerated. This acceleration has led to increased

services for Staff, but has also revealed areas for improvement or where additional investment is needed to maintain expected service levels and expectations.

With increased technology usage comes a need for greater protection and defense against hackers, cybercriminals and ransomware attacks. In FY23, the ITD leveraged federal funds from UASI grants (Urban Area Security Initiative) and ARPA to expand their cybersecurity program by implementing a SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) system to collect, analyze and monitor system and event logs and implemented a vendor management security platform.

The ITD provides services across Town departments and to the Schools. The Service Desk is funded by the School Department and provides user support and customer service to school staff. In FY23, the ITD implemented a cloud-based fax service for school nurses who still rely on faxed information.

The IT department submitted 9 expansion requests to the Administration for funding in FY24 including a systems upgrade for energy efficiency, Town Hall Wifi improvements, the reinstatement of an intern position, data processing supplies, education/training and a car stipend. The Systems Emissions Upgrade and Town Hall WiFi improvements were recommended for funding through ARPA. A request for ITD Point-to-Point Optical Transport Services was also submitted for ARPA funding, but is not on the recommended list for funding.

The department had several open positions during last year and has been successful in hiring a web developer, data administrator and service desk technicians. Round 1 ARPA funds were allocated for a cybersecurity analyst and, after a long search, the role was filled in February 2023. The new hires contributed to the department's diversity and the team is 22% female and 50% non-white. Feng Yang was named the Local IT Leader of the Year for 2022 by StateScoop, an organization that reports on news and events impacting technology decisions in state and local government.

The subcommittee asked about the IT Department's involvement in new school construction and whether the larger, modern buildings had an impact on their workload. Ms. Yang indicated that IT is consulted and provides input in areas such as network design and WiFi access points. She also indicated that the Service Desk has not seen an increase in support calls as the new school buildings have opened. Ms Yang did mention that since implementing MFA (Multi Factor Authentication) calls to the service desk for password resets have decreased and that decrease may have been offset by a small increase in cases related to the additional connected devices at the new school facilities.

During the hearing, questions were also raised about the status of tablets for in-person Town Meeting and whether the High School was suitably equipped to hold a hybrid Town Meeting. Ms. Yang indicated the high school auditorium needs upgraded audiovisual equipment to accommodate both in-person and remote participants at a hybrid Town Meeting. She said her team would be working with Brookline Interactive Group to determine the equipment needs and budget to allow for hybrid Town Meeting. [It should be noted that A&F's hearing was held before the State Legislature voted to legalize hybrid Representative Town Meetings.]

The IT Department, like many other Town departments, needs additional funding to successfully accomplish their objectives and meet the demands for increased services. The IT Department's expansion requests for FY24 represent a 23% increase in funding. As noted in last year's report, there will continue to be a steady increase in software costs due to the SaaS subscription model and, although supply chain issues have eased, equipment maintenance and replacement costs are up due to inflation.