



Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

Dockets #0588-0596 FY21 Budget

Boston Police Department

Working Session: Monday, May 11, 2020, 3:00 p.m.

Hearing: Thursday, May 21, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the Boston Police Department's budget at the Working Session on Monday, May 11, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Recording here: <https://youtu.be/2LdrTo1GtUA>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

1. Verbally at the hearing on Thursday, May 21st, at 10AM.
2. For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to May 21st, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
3. By deferring to a specific scheduled departmental budget hearing.

Please annotate and return this information request before May 21st, indicating how each question will be answered.

Boston Police Department Budget Questions

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:

- Regarding BPD's operating budget, it would be great to have a more detailed breakdown of how to look at the budget (for each division) beyond personnel and non-personnel.
 - For example, there is a \$4M increase for the Police Commissioners Office – what is this increase for?
 - There is an increase for personnel in BAT Operations – what is this increase for?
 - How is COVID-19 is affecting anticipated OT hours?
 - There is a \$12M increase for the Bureau of Field Services – what is this increase for?
 - There is large decrease in funding in the Bureau of Professional Development. What accounts for that decrease, especially as we increase the number in our academy classes?
 - There have been decreases in funding over the past few years for the Bureau of Professional Standards, and the Bureau of Investigative Services – almost \$20 million since FY19. What is the reason for the sharp decrease?
- Please review how the body camera program is currently running.
 - It's my understanding that we have a vendor contract through FY21 – what is the status of a new RFP or extending that contract? What lessons have been learned through the life of this first contract?



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- What is the logic of not requiring the body cameras to be used during OT hours?
- Your materials say that 15 officers were on paid administrative leave in FY19 and FY20. Are these the same officers? Are there any officers on long-term administrative leave?
- How is BPD thinking about and planning for their youth summer programs?
- Please discuss the BPD perspective regarding policing this summer. Due to the pandemic, and its effect on youth jobs and opportunities, as well as event cancellations, we will need an effective and compassionate approach.
 - Please discuss how you're thinking about summer violence in the City.
- Please talk about the impact of COVID-19 on crime in the City.
- Please discuss the BEST clinicians and the possibility of adding more to the team.
- Please speak to proactive efforts BPD has made over last few years to partner with BHA, especially as the BHA force has declined over the years due to losses in federal funding. The BHA police traditionally did a lot of foot patrols under a strategy of community and relational policing. Is BPD continuing these efforts?
- The Council has a hearing order before it regarding facial recognition technology and potentially banning it. This has come up in part due to the upcoming re-procurement that will be done for the contract for surveillance cameras. Please expand on this and BPD's thoughts on using the facial recognition patch.

Councilor Michael Flaherty asked:

- What is the attrition rate for BPD? Over the next few years we expect to see large waves of retirement, are we on pace to keep force numbers stable? This seems to be particularly important to think about as the pandemic continues to strain our public safety agencies.
 - There are 3 criminalist positions coming on board, and we are adding a 25-member recruit class. Is this enough to keep up with attrition?
- Please speak to the supervisory hierarchy for detectives. We have Captain Detectives, Lieutenant Detectives, and Sargent Detectives, all of whom supervise detectives but some of them have never been detectives themselves.
 - What is the logic for putting people in these supervisory roles without detective experience?
 - It seems that promoting from within the detective ranks would be good for cost-savings and morale.
- Is there a decrease in this year's budget?



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- Can you provide a status update on the body camera program? There was a \$2.3M investment to support the phase in in FY20.
 - What successes have we seen so far from program?
 - Are there ways to enhance it?
- Please provide updates on the investments in the crime lab.
- Please provide updates on the investments in the Community Engagement Bureau.
- Please provide an update on the changes that were made with respect to reporting and the electronic submission of incident reports.

Councilor Liz Breadon asked:

- Funding was allocated for a data analyst to look at traffic accident patterns in FY20?
 - Has this position been filled? How is this role going?
- Is there a service garage at District 14 in Brighton Center? There are a lot of police vehicles parked in the municipal lot, and there is a shortage of parking in Brighton Center, so I was curious if this lot doing double duty?
- In conversations with the police captain for District 14, he said one of the biggest challenges in the area is the high incidence of mental health crises. What kind of training and preparation does BPD do for intervention in that context?

Councilor Kim Janey, President, asked:

- Please provide an update on department diversity numbers, including a breakdown by race and gender.
- There are high levels of trauma that may experienced working in a public safety capacity. Please talk about services available and issues surrounding mental health for officers.
- There is a decrease in the BPD budget this year, following years of increases. Please explain.
- Please provide an update on initiatives for cadets.
- Investing in our workforce is incredibly important. Please discuss training and professional development provided by the department, including the dollar amounts that support these efforts.

Councilor Andrea Campbell asked:



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- What is the status of the data analyst hire? What are the specifics of the position/what does it entail?
- We have had conversations for years regarding the number of officers and the increased need due to increased traffic concerns and incidents of violence in various districts. Please discuss the number of officers on the force.
- Please provide an updated on the Youth Development Fund. What impact will COVID-19 have on this fund?
- Please talk about staffing diversity. What are the strategies being implemented to increase diversity?
- What trends have you been seeing with regards to domestic violence cases? Where is additional support needed?

Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George asked:

- Please discuss coverage in the Seaport, including the ongoing issue with jurisdiction.
- A hearing order was filed regarding wellness for our first responder agencies and access to mental health services and physical health supports. Can you speak to this?
- I called for a hearing order to form a study on staffing and spacing capacity in the Crime Lab. Can you provide updates on the Crime Lab's work?
- I have advocated for a number of years to increase the number of social workers who work with BPD through the BEST clinicians program. Please talk about the BEST program.
- Want to echo the call for a traffic data analyst position at BPD – can you speak to that?
- Please talk about the Bureau of Youth Engagement.
- BPD has an external fund to support efforts surrounding violence against women. This state grant is used to fund a civilian domestic violence advocate. Is there a decrease in this external fund?
 - Due to current pandemic, there has been an increase in domestic violence. Does the decrease in this external fund have an effect on our response to these cases?
- Please discuss BPD's involvement in sharps pickup. What is the volume of sharps pickup done by BPD?
- Please discuss the SSYI investment.
 - Is there an increase in this investment?
 - How will lessons learned be applied moving forward?



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- How many youths will the program serve?
- Due to the cancellation of parades and festivals in the current and first half of the next fiscal year – will we see any savings? Have these already been associated with other costs for COVID-19 response?

Councilor Matt O'Malley asked:

- BPD is pretty much level funded this year. Can you speak to the line item changes within the budget?
 - 2.4M increase in personnel.
 - \$1M decrease in contracted utility services.
 - \$1.8M decrease in equipment lease.
 - How many vehicles currently leased are electric or hybrid?
- Please discuss and expand on details of the Capital Budget.
- Please speak to plans to increase and grow the bike unit.
- The City's population has grown significantly over the past few years. Are we seeing responsive increases in BPD hiring and staffing?

Councilor Ed Flynn asked:

- Health and wellness for our first responders is more important than ever. We need to ensure that they're receiving the resources, education, and time off to keep themselves healthy and continue to work. I am a member of the Gulf War Registry for veterans who were exposed to toxins in the air. The registry is used to track people's health and get information about programs and resources available. Boston should create a registry of all first responders exposed to COVID-19, as this will likely be a long-term process. In addition to ensuring we study the impact of the virus on first responders testing positive, the City should plan to look into and plan for impacts on their medical insurance, time off, sick leave, retirement, etc.
- Mental health resources and support, including adequate counseling services, for first responders is critical. Please describe the supports in place.
- Please provide a breakdown of response times.
- Please discuss retention and retirement.
 - Please provide an estimate of the number of retirements anticipated over the next three years and the effect this will have on the department.
- Please discuss the BPD suicide prevention program. The Commissioner is doing excellent work ensuring officers receive mental health counseling. The suicide rate for officers nationally is very high, as it is for veterans. It is important to continue work on this program



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- The jurisdiction issues in the South Boston Waterfront have still not been resolved. We need to continue working closely with the state on this issue and making sure there is at least joint jurisdiction.
- Is there a way for veteran first responders to use a different pot of sick leave to go to VA medical appointments?
- Any updates regarding the ongoing study on getting a new police station for the South Boston Waterfront? Public safety city services are missing from this area and desperately needed for handling an emergency. (*Previously asked 4/16*)

Councilor Julia Mejia asked:

- In 2019 BPD worked 9000 hours of OT, which cost the city \$500,000 during the Straight Pride Parade.
 - How was number of officers needed determined?
 - On average how many OT hours did each officer work?
 - In general, how are overtime and staffing decisions like these made?
- What cultural competency trainings were in place for officers working the Straight Pride Parade? Have any been put in place since?
- Please discuss the body camera program. Body cameras. As of 2019, BPD only required officers to have the cameras on during regular shifts. Why?
- One of the department's goals is to provide enough PPE for all members. Do you currently have it? How long did it take to procure enough materials?
- Please provide more information on the gang database.
 - What information is collected? Who has access to the database? What are the protocols for sharing information with other agencies?
 - How does BPD determine gang affiliations?
- Please provide a breakdown of the number of officers that speak languages other than English.
 - How does BPD go about staffing those officers in particular neighborhoods?
- What does hiring and retention look like? Please expand on professional development and ways the department cultivates culture within it.
- Please discuss community policing efforts.
 - How is it going?
 - What role do community civic associations, schools, etc. play?
 - What does it look like with regards to outreach? Is outreach done in languages other than English?



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- Are approaches to community policing tailored to the particular culture and problems of a neighborhood?
- What resources would you need to better serve our communities, especially from a cultural competency standpoint?

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo asked:

- How many of the BPD's contracts are MBEs, WBEs, and SLBEs?
 - Based on the response to our requests for information, looks like 3 SLBEs and no minority or women-owned businesses out of over 200 contracts
 - What is BPD planning on diversifying its vendors to include more MBEs and WBEs?
- Why is there about a 47% increase in the Personnel Services for the Police Commissioner's Office?
- Why is there about a 64% decrease in Personnel Services for the Bureau of Professional Development?
- In the FIO 2019 files that the BPD released recently: Why are there so many instances of missing data?
 - For example, 32.9% of FIO Subject Ethnicity data are categorized as "unknown/missing"
- In the FIO 2019 files that the BPD released recently, the number of FIO subjects increased from 2018 to 2019: Why is that?
- In the FIO 2019 files that the BPD released recently, 69.1% (9,974 individuals) of FIO Subjects were Black, whereas only 22.7% of Boston's population is Black: Why are Black individuals overrepresented in FIO?
 - What is the BPD doing to address this concerning statistic?
 - Is there any part of the budget allocated toward trying to investigate this trend or resolve this issue?