

Braintree Fire Department Fiscal 2021 Summary

The Braintree Fire Department consists of 90 full time personnel broken down as follows:

Fire Chief

Financial Coordinator

Fire Marshall (Deputy Chief)

Hazmat Officer (Captain)

Fire Alarm Superintendent (Captain)

Training Officer (Lieutenant)

Fire Suppression

We have 4 working groups consisting of 21 Firefighters per group. We have 3 fire stations that we man and maintain; Headquarters, East Braintree and the Highlands station.

Each shift we have 5 Firefighters in the Highlands station, 3 Firefighters in East Braintree and 13 Firefighters at Headquarters. We are contractually bound to a minimum manning clause of 17 Firefighters per shift and we have 5 vacation slots allotted per shift day and night. If the manning drops below 17 Firefighters, we fill the necessary vacancies through overtime.

The Fire Suppression table of organization is as follows:

4 Deputy Chiefs

4 Captains

20 Lieutenants

56 Firefighters ~

As requested, the Braintree Fire Department made reductions and the following accounts were affected:

Training

- In Service Training to \$0 (Reduction of \$23,000)

Fire Alarm Repair

- Fire Alarm Repairs to \$3,000 (Reduction of \$3,500)

Hazmat

- Hazmat Expenses to \$1,000 (Reduction of \$500)

Equipment Maintenance

- Outside M/V Repairs to \$59,858 (Reduction of \$15,000)
- Data Processing to \$0 (Reduction of \$7,000)
- Diesel to \$23,000 (Reduction of \$2,000)

Building Maintenance

- Equipment Maintenance to \$25,000 (Reduction of \$24,000)
- Lighting to \$30,000 (Reduction of \$7,000)
- Natural Gas to \$20,000 (Reduction of \$4,500)

Fire Suppression

- Reduce Replacement of Fire Equipment to \$30,000 (Reduction of \$28,354)
- EMS Supplies to \$0 (Reduction of \$1,000)

Administration

- Photocopy Rental to \$3,500 (Reduce \$4,000)
- Data Processing to \$0 (reduce by \$7,000)
- Office Supplies to \$4,000 (\$2,000 reduction)
- Postage to \$250 (\$250 reduction)
- Printing to \$500 (\$500 reduction)
- Meetings/Seminars to \$100 (\$650 reduction)
- Out of State Travel to \$0 (\$1,000 reduction)
- Wireless Fees to \$2,000 (\$1,000 reduction)

Total Reductions: \$132,254

In addition to the line item reductions, adjustments were made to the payroll/salary programs to account for anticipated retirements and hiring of new firefighters. Forecasting at least two retirements in FY2021 and delaying any hiring until April 2021, the Fire Department was able to further reduce the total budget by an additional \$93,166.93.

The total reduction to the Fire Department budget for FY2021 is \$225,420.93.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Questions from Ways & Means

- As a percent of the total general fund, how does 7.8% (Police) and 6.2% (Fire) compare to other communities similar to Braintree's size, complexity, etc.? Do you feel adequately funded?

We have not compared the Fire Department budget to other communities. While we can always benefit from additional funding, this budget request will allow us to continue providing the current level of services to the residents. I will continue to review our operations and make sure that we are operating in the most efficient way possible and have a fire fighter who is tasked with researching outside grant/funding opportunities to supplement the existing budget.

The reductions made from the FY20 budget identify our priorities for the next fiscal year and accommodate our contractual obligations to the fire fighters.

- Where would funding for PPE, the special uniform clothes washers, and other important safety items fall - capital planning budget? Do you have funding for these necessities?

Additional protective equipment, including PPE, required as a result of COVID-19 is being paid out of the FY20 operating budget. We are keeping track of all COVID-19 related costs, including equipment and salaries, for submission to FEMA/MEMA for potential reimbursement. Earlier this year we received a grant to fund the purchase of new washers for our equipment and are continuing to apply for grants to support the purchase of PPE and safety equipment.

22001 – Administration

- Why such a large jump in educational?

The "Educational" line in this program covers the education benefit provided to the Chief pursuant to his contract. The Chief is compensated an additional amount because he holds an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice.

22002 Building Maintenance

- 50% reduction in equipment maintenance will be well below the last three years. What has changed that we expect we won't need this funding in FY 21? And would deferring maintenance put us in a position where we'd need even more funding in a subsequent year?

This line is used to cover repairs in our buildings, including generators, compressors and garage doors. It does not cover the cost of apparatus/other equipment repairs. There is a request as part of the FY20 capital plan to increase funding to support a renovation to headquarters and, as a result, less funding will be required to make repairs in that station.

22004 Fire Suppression

- **What is “working out of grade”? We have routinely been spending over \$60K for this and are on pace in FY20 to do the same. What changed that we should only be budgeting \$30K?**

Out of grade occurs when more than one officer at the rank of Lieutenant, Captain or Deputy Chief is out of work (regardless of the reason) and a lower ranking fire fighter has to fill in at the higher grade. That individual is then compensated at the higher rate of pay while covering the shift. The need for out of grade work varies depending on circumstances and can vary. We continue to monitor staffing/scheduling to ensure that this is being used appropriately and, to the extent possible, within the budgeted amount.

- **Overtime: How is OT handled? The last three years, we have been well over the requested budgeted amount. Why would this year be any different?**

The fire department has a minimum manning requirement, which means that during every shift there must be at least 17 fire fighters on duty. Anytime there are less fire fighters on a shift, we are required to staff with additional fire fighters on overtime. We continue to manage the staffing levels and are working with the Mayor’s Office and Finance Director to increase funding to this line in an effort to avoid the need for supplemental requests in the future.

- **Replace Fire Equipment budget has gone down significantly from FY18 and FY19. What changed?**

The Department is currently in compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards, which require two sets of gear per fire fighter. As a result, we anticipate that the need to purchase/replace additional equipment going forward will decrease and the requested amount is sufficient to meet the FY21 needs.

22008 Training

- **In service training has been entirely cut. Is this something we should be cutting?**

This line does not cover the actual training cost and instead is used to fund the payroll expenses associated with fire fighters attending training. Fire fighters typically attend in service while off duty and the overtime cost is charged to the general overtime line. These costs will continue to be charged to the overtime account in FY21, making this line unnecessary.