

Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department is comprised of four full time employees: Human Resources Director, Benefits Coordinator, Human Resources Generalist and Veterans' Agent and one part-time Administrative Assistant to the Veterans' Agent. There are four programs within Human Resources: Administration, Employee Benefits, Veterans' Benefits and Celebrations.

Our department is responsible for coordinating hiring, resignations and retirements of all non-school and non-BELD employees. We process all salary increases for steps and cost of living adjustments and track employee accruals, usage and balances. The Director is part of the negotiating team for collective bargaining and handles step 2 and step 3 grievances as well as investigations of any Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) complaints. We approve/deny all Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and other leave requests.

Employee Benefits for all Town employees, including School and BELD, are administered by Human Resources. The Town is self-insured for its health insurance, workers' compensation and injured-on-duty programs and unemployment. Department of Transportation (DOT) drug and alcohol testing and non-DOT drug and alcohol testing are coordinated through our department. Employer Medicare/Social Security and Pension payments are paid out of our department also.

The Veterans' Division assists Town of Braintree veterans with Chapter 115 Benefits, Federal disability benefits, health benefits, food, housing and other needs. The Division also runs the Memorial Day, (including placing a new flag on each gravesite), Veterans' Day and Pearl Harbor Day events for the Town.

The following is a summary of the Accounts with significant changes, both increases and reductions, from Fiscal Year 2020 and the reason for each:

- 01-15201-5173 Unemployment Compensation
 - 33.29% reduction
 - Based on expenditures to date and that the federal government will reimburse unemployment 50% through 12/31/20.
- 01-15201-5181 Vacation Buyback
 - 39.83% reduction
 - Based on expenditures to date. FY2020 was based on anticipated retirements through 6/30/20. Some employees have not yet retired.
- 01-15201-5189 Sick Leave Conversion
 - 100% increase
 - New line item for FY2021 based on BPMA and AFSCME CBAs.
- 01-15201-5190 Retirement Sick Leave
 - 29.79% reduction
 - Based on expenditures to date. FY2020 was based on anticipated retirements through 6/30/20.
- 01-15201-5198 Tuition Reimbursement

- 66.66% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years.
- 01-15201-5304 Labor Relation/Cont
 - 71.42% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years.
- 01-15201-5305 Consultants
 - 50% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years.
- 01-15201-5306 Advertising
 - 33.33% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years and anticipated reduction in new hires.
- 01-15201-5314 Pre-employment Physicals
 - 25% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years and anticipated reduction in new hires.
- 01-15201-5710 Meetings/Seminars in State
 - 60% reduction
 - Will attend Annual MMA Meeting only.
- 01-15201-5711 Mileage
 - 33.33% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over the past few fiscal years.
- 01-15204-5126 Workers' Comp Public Safety
 - 23.54% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over the past few fiscal years.
- 01-15204-5149 Drug/Alcohol Testing
 - 50% increase
 - Based on number of employees anticipated to be tested in FY2021.
- 01-15204-5175 Group Health & Medical Insurance
 - 8.72% increase
 - Based on anticipated increases in medical costs in FY2021.
- 01-15204-5179 Benefits Reserve
 - 100% reduction
 - This was for FY2020 cost of living adjustments for collective bargaining agreements expiring 6/30/19.

- 01-15204-5180 Long Term Disability
 - 16.27% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over the past few fiscal years.

- 01-15206-5101 Department Head
 - 6.89% reduction
 - Based on hiring of new Veterans' Agent.

- 01-15206-5421 Printing/Forms
 - 33.33% reduction
 - Based on FY2020 expenditures to date.

- 01-15206-5711 Mileage
 - 16.66% reduction
 - Based on anticipated FY2021 expenditures.

- 01-15206-5730 Dues/Memberships/Subscriptions
 - 50% reduction
 - Based on anticipated FY2021 expenditures.

- 01-15206-5770 Veteran Benefits – Ordinary
 - Level Funded

- 01-15207-5533 Signs
 - 50% reduction
 - Based on anticipated FY2021 expenditures.

Questions from Ways & Means

Q. General: is the School Department Benefits encompassed in the HR Budget?

A. Yes.

- 01-15201-5173 Unemployment Compensation
 - 33.29% reduction
 - Based on expenditures to date and that the federal government will reimburse unemployment 50% through 12/31/20.

Q. Is our full year unemployment projection \$65,433 or is it \$98,100 (the \$65K that is requested + the \$32K expected from the Federal gov't)?

- *If \$65K, if the Feds are only going to reimburse through calendar year end, where does that leave us for Jan. 1 – June 30, 2021?*

A. The \$65,433 represents the anticipated expenditures for all of FY21. This number is based on prior years' spending and incorporates the anticipated reimbursement of 50% for costs incurred through December 31, 2021 pursuant to the CARES Act.

- 01-15201-5181 Vacation Buyback
 - 39.83% reduction
 - Based on expenditures to date. FY2020 was based on anticipated retirements through 6/30/20. Some employees have not yet retired.

Q. Is there a financial benefit to a "use it or lose it" vacation policy? If so, is it something we should consider? Is a buy back contractually obligated?

A. The vacation buyback is governed by collective bargaining agreements. Most of our collective bargaining agreements allow employees to carry over unused vacation time from year to year, but the number of days eligible to carry over is capped. Any earned but unused time at the end of someone's employment must be paid out pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 149 s. 148 and the applicable collective bargaining agreement provision.

- 01-15201-5189 Sick Leave Conversion
 - 100% increase
 - New line item for FY2021 based on BPMA and AFSCME CBAs.

Q. Can you please help me with these acronyms? Thank you!

A. Braintree Professional Management Association (BPMA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), collective bargaining agreement (CBA)

- 01-15201-5304 Labor Relation/Cont
 - 71.42% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years.

Q. Is this reduction based in part on the contracts being completed for fire, police, library? Why did we have zero expenditure over the past three years?

A. This line is used to cover arbitration costs relating to grievances filed by the unions. In recent cases, the Department involved in the grievance has covered the costs relating to arbitration out of their budget. This includes payment to the arbitrator and stenographer/transcription costs.

- 01-15201-5305 Consultants
 - 50% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years.

Q. Any anticipated consultants' fees in FY 21? Is this an area for further reductions or moving money around if nothing has been expended for 2 fiscal years?

A. We have used this line for special investigations in the past. In FY20, we anticipate using the full \$5000.

- 01-15201-5314 Pre-employment Physicals
 - 25% reduction
 - Based on expenditures over past few fiscal years and anticipated reduction in new hires.

Q. In FY 20, this came in 55% above budget (thru 4/24/20). Were there a lot of new hires increasing this number?

A. Yes. We have hired 25 employees in FY20. Of those, 11 were in the Police Department, requiring a more comprehensive pre-employment testing. In addition, the same level of pre-employment testing was conducted on four firefighter applicants anticipated to attend the Fire Academy in FY21.

- 01-15206-5101 Department Head
 - 6.89% reduction
 - Based on hiring of new Veterans' Agent.

Q. Is this reduction because we are going to fewer hours for this department head or because we are hiring someone with less experience or both?

A. This amount will fund a full time position; however, because it will be a new employee s/he will start at a lower step on the salary scale than the last employee to hold the position.

- 01-15206-5770 Veteran Benefits – Ordinary
 - Level Funded

Q. We are ~8% over FY20 budget for grave supplies. Do we expect to run over in FY21? If not, why not?

A. The price of flags increased in FY20. We are hoping to reduce costs in FY21 by soliciting other vendors.

Q. Why did the unemployment costs decrease – is this due to the Govt picking up portions of unemployment due to Covid?

A. The \$65,433 represents the anticipated expenditures for all of FY21. This number is based on prior years' spending and incorporates the anticipated reimbursement of 50% for costs incurred through December 31, 2021 pursuant to the CARES Act.

Q. Why did the vacation buyback change so significantly? What happened in 2020 to cause it to jump? Are we confident that the estimated budget will not be exceeded?

A. The vacation buyback is governed by collective bargaining agreements. Most of our collective bargaining agreements allow employees to carry over unused vacation time from year to year, but the number of days eligible to carry over is capped. Any earned but unused time at the end of someone's employment must be paid out pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 149 s. 148 and the applicable collective bargaining agreement provision.

Q. Same question for retirement sick leave but there was a jump in 2019 vs. 2020. Are we confident that the estimated budget will not be exceeded?

A. A large number of employees retired in FY19. Since only public safety has a mandatory retirement age it is difficult to anticipate retirements. Department Heads give HR their projections, but these are subject to change.

Q. For the line Veterans – is that Veteran Benefits? If not what is this line?

A. Yes

Q. Why the decrease in Department head salary?

A. This amount will fund a full time position; however, because it will be a new employee s/he will start at a lower step on the salary scale than the last employee to hold the position.