

City Responses to Public Questions

Information Technology Staffing Request

There were several questions with regard to the proposed build-out of an Information Technology Department which the City Manager has recognized as necessary to increase levels of service, improve cybersecurity, and allow for improvements to the IT environment.

Why does the Police Department (PD) and School Department have its own IT staff and what is the IT Department's Relationship with these other IT professionals within the City structure? Both the PD and the School have separate IT teams to best meet the needs of their particular environments. In addition, the personnel employed by the PD ultimately report to the Police Chief and fall under the Police Commission's purview and the School Department's employees fall under the authority of the Superintendent of Schools. There is cooperation and coordination among the PD, School and the City's IT personnel and vendors where appropriate.

The PD IT personnel manage the department's use and compliance with the FBI Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS), State Police Online Telecommunications System (SPOTS-criminal history information), the Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and Mutualink (interoperability software between police/fire/coastguard/hospitals). They manage all aspects of the Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System (CAD/RMS) for Police and Fire. This system contains all police data from dispatch, and police activity to include arrest and incident reports, investigation case management, etc. They are also responsible for the mobile data systems in cruisers (laptops) to include the Virtual Private Network (VPN) and access to SPOTS, the CAD/RMS system, and NCIC database, and troubleshooting issues. They manage the cross agency system that allows Portsmouth the ability to access the database at about 20 other NH police agencies who are connected, and allows for real time data accessibility of their offender databases.

The PD also maintains a redundant dispatch center at an off-site location. Dispatch must be able to function should the police headquarters become inoperable. They also support much of the other equipment law enforcement officers use, such as license plate readers (using NCIC), cameras, interview room recording systems, investigation surveillance equipment, drone equipment, systems that read all kinds of security video from Portsmouth business and private security surveillance systems.

The PD must maintain much of its own IT infrastructure separate and apart from the remainder of the City's systems because law enforcement IT is very specialized and requires clearances at multiple levels. The PD's two IT personnel, who must be familiar with and comply with all PD Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and General Orders (GO), manage the in-house administrative computers, server systems, software programs and licensing, internet, and WIFI access points as well as the security of those systems department-wide. They are responsible for and support the myriad equipment necessary for officers, including the handheld mobile devices, in-cruiser radios, phone line recording systems in dispatch, a microwave antenna system located at multiple sites across the city (required for all communications between officers/dispatch) and the generator system at each antenna site to ensure the antenna system never goes "down" due to a power outage.

Policing is very dependent on technology. If dispatch goes down, IT has to fix the problem immediately, cameras watching occupants in holding cells cannot be down, the AFIS machine (fingerprint) in booking cannot be down at 2am. Both IT staff receive notifications from issues with the servers, generators kicking on at an antenna offsite location, or a call from the shift commander about any number of IT issues that have to be resolved at the moment. 24/7/365 takes on a new meaning for IT in a 24/7/365 operation.

Could some of the IT personnel resources within the School Department and the Police Department assist with the municipal needs? Not at this time. If anything, providing a robust in house staff on the municipal side could over the long term help with IT tasks across the organization. Neither the PD nor the School have resources to spare.

The School IT department supports the administrative and academic needs of around 500 staff and just under 3000 students as well as over 3000 client devices. This is a larger client base than the municipal side of the City. To meet the unique needs of an education environment with a mix of academics, administration, business needs, children, and adults, the School Department maintains a separate wireless and wired network infrastructure as well as maintaining a separate datacenter. The School Department maintains and heavily uses its student information system as well as integrating this database with its parent communication system, Google Classroom, flex block scheduling system, professional development system, cybersecurity training system, etc. While the School Department does have distinct needs, wherever possible it does coordinate and integrate with the municipal side of the City on such projects as the financial database, website, and metropolitan area network and maintains a positive and collaborative relationship.

Would the School and PD IT personnel report to the proposed new Chief Information Officer? No. But management assumes there will be improved coordination and greater opportunities to leverage knowledge and vendor services with the addition of a Chief Information Officer.

Why are two support (help desk) technicians proposed in the budget? Can't we make do with one? Two support technicians are recommended given the number of employees, the diversity of software programs, needs and services and the 24/7/365 municipal operations. The City has regular Library and Recreation programming that occurs in the evening and on weekends and two support technicians would allow for staggered coverage. In addition, Public Works operations routinely occur afterhours (snow operations, water and wastewater treatment and parking garage operations).

The City has been working with Jason Sgro of the Atom group for over nine months to help manage the City's IT systems and to provide project and consulting advice to improve the City's delivery of IT services both to staff and to the public. He has recommended these staff additions based on his years of experience in the industry. If the City does not retain the necessary support technicians, senior IT staff, who are needed for more strategic tasks, testing of systems, policy development and project implementation, will continue to be dragged into day-to-day problems that should be handled by support technicians. The City will lose the investment intended by this effort to move away from its dependency on a managed services provider. The current heavy dependency on a managed services provider presents risks and limitations that need to be remedied. Adding these staff positions will bring the City of Portsmouth in line with other NH municipalities.

Would it be less expensive to contract out IT support technician? No. It is not cost effective to outsource to get the level of service and security needed.

Police Department Staffing Questions

There were several questions with regard to the Police Department's request to add three positions, two patrol officers and a crime analyst. The 4.8% increase reflects the costs for those positions. The Police Department has provided the following detailed information with regard to those positions:

Since 2004, the Police Department has been trying to restore the level of officers from that time to 71. The PD had 69 officers before the economic downturn in 2008-2012, and still has not restored the officers lost during that event. Currently the Police Department has 68 officers.

As stated in the salary list, the two officer positions are located in lines 51 and 52 in the non-ranking section of the salary list (note: the description says "PATROL #69 and PATROL #70" respectively), relating to the total number of sworn between ranking and non-ranking positions, adding the 69th and the 70th sworn position. The Crime Analyst/Patrol Support position is in line 24 of the civilian section. The restoration of this position (originally cut in 2008) will provide the PD with one crime analyst.

The PD recommends additional staff due to the changes in Portsmouth's landscape and demands of an ever-changing law enforcement profession and the types of crimes that evolve. In determining staff levels, the PD analyzes beats, calls for service, types of calls and the characteristics of the city, which includes the following: regular beat coverage; tens of thousands of cars on local roadways; 15 critical infrastructure categorized as high value terrorist targets by the Department of Homeland Security such as propane/gas storage terminals, airport, military facilities, shipping lanes, bridges and high profile events to name a few; the daily influx of a work and play population, estimated at 40K to 60K a day, and the event influx population for a wide variety of arts, recreational and cultural events that start in March and end about January 1st (not just summer) that can draw over 100K people (and their vehicles) to well over 150 planned and unplanned events from road races to political events.

Other factors in determining coverage include the significant number of liquor licenses (that result in increased DUI's and other drunkenness activities). Portsmouth has 150+ licenses issued --- almost the highest in the state. Portsmouth is a center of regional commerce with a very diverse economic base including numerous hotels, Water Country, Pease, and the port. With regard to drugs, Portsmouth is on the "spoke" of I95 from Massachusetts and into Maine, Route 16 to the White Mountains, and Route 1 to the northern/southern seacoast. This is such a significant issue that the Police Department has one detective assigned to the FBI Drug Task Force to handle the broader picture around Portsmouth and two other detectives for just Portsmouth.

Additional considerations include the responsibilities of the Pease Tradeport, including the airport. Public/Business requests (example: traffic, extra attention after a break-in, business risk assessments, safety presentations like CRASE-Citizen Response to Active Shooter Events where thousands have been trained, etc.). Portsmouth includes six school campuses with over 2600 students and a major university right up the street. Portsmouth also has a homeless population and sex offender population.

These demands for service are challenging given the availability of man-hours and all the items to consider under that umbrella namely: sworn officers are required to train, go to court, and recertify on their equipment annually. They are allowed to use leave they earn, they get sick, injured, are called up for military duty, or use FMLA to care for a family member. Officers are not unreasonable in expecting a little work/life balance and time off with their kids. And, there are many outside work details to cover from prom up to traffic details requiring an officer/cruiser, and security details protecting certain sites for various reasons, etc. Mutual Aid requests come in from other towns asking for help in multiple situations. In addition, many officers have collateral duties in-house to juggle.

The Police Department does not have enough staff to cover the beats in the City now without a significant number of order-ins of officers on days off/training/court, let alone pro-active policing and protecting all the other extra characteristics Portsmouth offers their residents and visitors. Portsmouth is a unique location in NH and on the Seacoast as a destination city.

The City may not have grown in population significantly, but much has changed in policing this City. Opioids, computer crimes, which take a massive amount of time to investigate, internet crimes against children have exploded, mental health issues have increased, again, those calls take a lot of time, burglaries of construction sites, and those same sites once occupied to name a few changes.

Again, staffing is complex and constantly changing to respond to a changing city, state, and country.

The crime analyst/patrol support position was needed back in 2008 when it was cut. Policing, in part, is statistics driven. In Patrol, data analysis is used to more effectively deploy personnel and resources. For example: what is the high crime/crash time, what time of day, day of week, locations. However, the crime analyst position doesn't just work with statistics. An analyst also assists detectives in solving crimes. For example: this person scoured the databases for "like items stolen" or sequence of events to try and connect to a perpetrator(s) to a crime. This person uses all the data in many different ways to assist multiple divisions within the department.

Assisting in Patrol requires a restoration of this type of function in the department that was identified over 20 years ago. Patrol has no support. It is a division where we currently use high cost sworn staff to do things like make sure the numerous forms used in Patrol are in stock (state, fed, local, etc.), managing grant paperwork for initiatives like traffic patrols, and the like. Restoring this function in patrol, would be efficient and cost effective.

Fire Department Ambulance Inquiries

Where do we see the revenue going for the ambulance? And, what is the status of the third ambulance? Ambulance revenue is recorded in the General Fund. The Fire Department needs to reach 16 officers on duty with a minimum staffing of 15 in order to adequately staff the ambulance at Station 3. (The Fire Department currently has a staff of 15 with a minimum of 13). This is a multi-year plan that began in 2019 and was derailed the last two FY's because of COVID. This year, the additional money for the OT coverage accounts to increase minimum staffing to 14 and is an attempt to re-start the gradual plan toward the staffing of the third ambulance.

Additional Police Department Related Questions

Would you clarify the step increases and COLA adjustments?

Step increases are for those employees who have not reached the top step per the respective collective bargaining agreements. If contracts are expired, step increases are still honored and budgeted within each department. The COLA, separate from step-up increases, is budgeted within each department for only those contracts that are settled. See page 13 of the proposed budget document. The COLA for this fiscal year is 2.05%

Were the recent/new police promotions included in the budget (are the recent promotions accounted for in the salary schedule)? Are they listed as the unfunded positions on page 283?

The promotions are included in the salary section. The promotions were to backfill existing positions due to retirements/resignation of three ranking officers in March and April 2022. The two “unfunded positions” listed in the salary chart are from a reduction in force from budget cuts in FY2004 and a position that was downgraded from a Sergeant to an officer level, again due to additional budget cuts in FY2007. The PD has not been able to restore those positions since those dates.

Computer software and maintenance – we’ve seen an increase in this line item from FY21 up through to the new budget. When we get the new crime system (upgrade) will that affect this? Will it bring this line item down? Will it decrease the cost for maintenance on the old system?

The increase in budgeted amount has increased from \$98,000 in 2021 to \$131,356 in FY22 (when we added in the first part of the move to a cloud-based email system) to \$200,969 FY23’s request. Over \$60,000 of the increase is attributable to the migration and monthly costs associated with a CJIS compliant cloud based email system. The other increases include new server maintenance agreements for digital investigative software and server systems, and significant increases in other agreements for our main Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System (CAD/RMS) and our Motorola Contract (radio system)

Policing is technology intensive and requires a lot of systems. Investigating crimes has become technologically intensive as well. The tools are costly. When the new CAD/RMS system is in, this line will actually increase. The new system is a higher tier product that is much more robust and costly to run.

What is the status of the mold remediation project at the PD (in the CIP)?

The administrative second floor is complete. The first floor (patrol, detectives, booking, evidence) are in process to be completed in the next few months. The first floor dispatch and court areas are still pending ,waiting to be scheduled. The basement level (locker room, gym, etc.) is also still pending, waiting to be scheduled.

Why are four vehicles needed for the Police Department?

The four cars requested are necessary. Five cars were originally requested in FY23. However, due to reductions in the budget request, one car and a motorcycle replacement were removed. The Crown Victorias are the prior model of police vehicles before the SUV Interceptors became the norm. The remaining two Crown Victorias are the last of that model in the fleet. After being taken off the patrol line, they have been used as School Resource Officers, Administrative, training, and outside work vehicles. These vehicles were purchased in 2011 and their mileage and car infrastructure (we had to replace a gas tank in one as it rusted out and was leaking gasoline in the back parking lot) are at a retirement point. When the new replacement vehicles arrive, they will be deployed in Patrol first.

The patrol cars are used 24/7/365. We run these cars until they reach over 100K in mileage. At that time they are assessed to see if they can be used to replace a detective car, SRO car, ACO vehicle or training/administrative car, etc. If not, they are auctioned.

The schedule for replacement should be five per year to ensure officers have the best vehicle to use. However, the past several years, the replacement number has been below that due to budget constraints. That means we have higher repair costs, cars that don't function as well/respond as well, given the higher mileage, etc.

Why is there an increase in the Health insurance budget when the staff numbers decreased and the health insurance number given online was 2.3 (which is lower than last years)?

See the discussion under the School Department section below relative to health insurance and see particularly the table included.

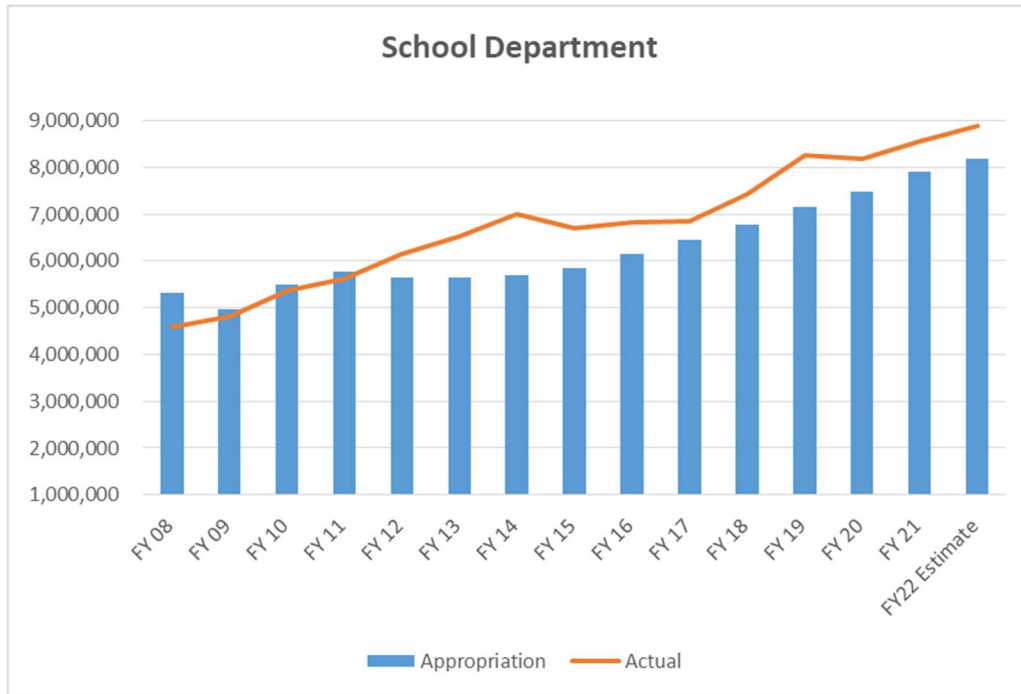
School Department Questions

Why is the health insurance budgeted at 5.4 when School Care is listed at 3.9%?

School Care increase for FY23 is 3.9% over prior year premiums however, the School's health insurance costs are budgeted with an increase of 5.4% consistent with the 10-year rolling average of School Care's annual rate changes. As you can see from the table below (also in the FY23 Proposed Budget Document) the budget for all departments is \$932,514 less than the estimated city cost for the premiums. This shortfall will be funded by Health Stabilization Reserves.

HEALTH INSURANCE			FY23	FY23	FY23	Health Ins
	% Change	FY22 Budget	Change	Proposed Budget	Estimated City Cost	Stabilization Reserve
General Government	2.30%	2,096,570	48,221	2,144,791	2,275,731	(130,940)
Police Department	2.30%	1,654,004	38,042	1,692,046	1,747,248	(55,202)
Fire Department	2.30%	1,086,917	24,999	1,111,916	1,183,318	(71,402)
School	5.40%	8,173,354	441,361	8,614,715	9,289,685	(674,970)
Total General Fund		\$13,010,845	\$552,623	\$13,563,468	\$14,495,982	(\$932,514)

The table below depicts the budget to actual for the School Department Health premiums from FY08 to estimated FY22. Following the policy set forth of the 10 year rolling average, the school has been under budget for several years. This practice is explained under Budget Highlights on pages 15-16 of the FY23 Proposed Budget Document and further detailed under Financial Policies and Guidelines on pages 123-124 of the budget document.



Doesn't the assistant superintendent's job include curriculum coordination? What is the need for this position?

The School Department has reduced Central Office administrative positions over the last 15 years. It reduced a Technology Director as well as a Reading/Title I Director. The Assistant Superintendent role has been a core role in the district for well over two decades, taking on the Technology Director's responsibilities while also overseeing most grants, curriculum, assessment, and professional development. The Curriculum Coordinator role would focus specifically on curriculum revision for all subjects, as well as new initiatives such as outdoor education, social emotional learning, and elementary world language.

Re: use of ESSER Funds – added BCBA to the budget – a couple of other positions also that could be short term? (Why are they added in this way?)

The current need for the BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) is being addressed through contracted services. The Schools have growing needs for this role now and anticipated for next year. The contract services are being reduced as an offset to the new salary costs. The challenge of successfully finding a good candidate for our schools remains.

Have you reviewed the policy of how many children per teachers (the City's policy), do we have more teachers than policy requires?

The Collective Bargaining Agreement for teachers establishes a goal of 20 students per teacher or less in K-5 classrooms and 24 at other grade levels. Staffing is already adjusted when reducing an elementary teacher would still allow us to stay within those guidelines. This situation played out with the elimination of two elementary positions last year. Middle school staffing is based on the team model and a significant reduction of staff would only occur if the student population fell to the point of being able to eliminate an entire team, which currently is not the case. Similarly, there is currently not an opportunity to reduce high school staffing.

What are we doing with the \$2 million ESSER funds not used on the Community Campus? Why are we not using it to fund some of the budget?

The School Department budget presentation identified that approximately 68% of the nearly \$4 million of ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds currently being planned are for infrastructure improvements including air quality investments at multiple school buildings. Additionally, ESSER funds are planned for programming to address learning loss including extended day and summer programs, student and staff wellness activities, instructional technology purchases, and software/material purchases to support programs.

Positions that were considered for inclusion in the budget but were instead planned for ESSER funding were a Social Worker, an Elementary Outdoor Education Teacher, and a Math Interventionist for PHS.

What restorations does the school feel it's making since the budget has increased each year, even during COVID?

It is important to remember that even as contractually obligated costs such as health and retirement drove an overall increase to the budget last year, the School Department actually cut 5.8 positions and over \$300,000 in operating expenses to deliver a responsible budget to the taxpayer. While the operating costs are restored in this budget, the School Department is not seeking a restoration of the positions eliminated last year.

Do all of our schools get the same opportunity for funding? Are all of the kids getting the same opportunities to have the same programs with the funding that the city is providing through tax dollars?

The School Department places a priority on providing the same level of service across all three elementary schools even though some receive additional funding through Title I.

Page 392 – Athletics Cost Center (cost center 115) If you're adding the athletic director on top of this cost center – Are your contract services for pupils going to increase or decrease? Is this the reason for the increase?

The proposed budget for Cost Center 115 - Athletics includes a new position of Athletic Director with salary and related taxes and retirement amounts. The contracted service amount of \$49,000 related to the previous MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City has been eliminated as an offsetting savings for that new position. That savings is recognized in the Contract Service: Pupil line in the proposed budget.

Cost center 137 – system wide psychologist – is it enough for what we need?

The proposed budget for Cost Center 173 - Psychologist is based upon the identified needs of students as they are known now.

Cost center 150 – PEEP, looks like we're going down here, looks like enrollment is up so why is the budget going down?

The observed decrease in Cost Center 150 - PEEP (Portsmouth Early Education Program) is the result of contracted specialized nursing services being reduced from this cost center. Paraeducator hours have been increased to accommodate the increase in program hours in that program for next year.

SPED middle school cost center 152 – also is decreasing, has this been looked at?

The observed decrease in Cost Center 152 - Special Ed Middle School is the result of faculty retirement and savings in replacement hiring. The proposed budget in this area is reflective of the known needs of that population.

ESL – adding a para there, is that enough?

The ESL (English as a Second Language) paraeducator added in the proposed budget is intended to address the specific breadth of needs that some of our relocating ESL students and families have in the transition into our school community.

School board cost center 171 – adding 30,000 in contracted services –what is this for?

The School Board included that \$30,000 appropriation to cover anticipated costs for consulting support and expertise in strategic planning, curriculum review, and communications assessment exercises next year.

Page 397 – technology – we have software which is increasing continuously and new system equipment, is that the same thing (it’s a large jump)? Any economies of scale we can realize?

The School Department technology operating budget (not including salaries/benefits) was \$400,475 in FY19 and \$407,486 in FY20. Reductions of \$71,100 in FY21 and \$80,000 more in FY22 were made because federal funding was anticipated as an option to support those needs. The proposed FY23 technology budget of \$403,358 seeks to restore funding for ongoing maintenance of the school system’s technology infrastructure.

Page 399 – pupil transportation – was cost of fuel taken into consideration?

Elevated fuel costs were considered in the initial development of the proposed FY23 budget. The prices that we are seeing now and might possibly see in the coming school year are higher than projected, but the School Department is prepared to make adjustments as necessary to address those impacts.

Miscellaneous Questions regarding the General Government and Parking

Why we are putting any money into the charging stations?

As part of being an Eco-Municipality and its ongoing commitment to sustainability, the City Council has included funding to support the establishment of electric vehicle charging stations at appropriate locations throughout the City.

Why is there money in the budget for the Chamber of Commerce?

The Chamber of Commerce has established networks and communications, standing events, and email databases and can quickly communicate and implement programming to continue to attract the tourism economy the City thrives on as well as supporting 750 small businesses (the majority of the membership is small business). Chamber events are open to non-members. A manufacturer’s roundtable is being reestablished. The City is open to working with other organizations, but the Chamber is effective and the relationship should be supported.

Miscellaneous Water/Sewer/Stormwater Questions

Water Professional Services (page 407) - Is the significant increase based on actual needs/use?

\$575,000 of this money is attributed to the costs at the Pease Water Treatment Facility which will be reimbursed by the Air Force through our existing agreement. \$525,000 is for filter media replacement, \$45,000 for laboratory testing of PFAS and \$5,000 for engineering assistance.

Why are we utilizing 2018 numbers (page 409)? Should we update the numbers based on current commercial and residential use?

We review this data annually and perform a comprehensive analysis every five years. The 2018 data is for the last comprehensive analysis. We track water consumption data through billing every month and trends are still in line with 2018 data.

On the PIWWTF SRF are we locked in at a rate (for interest) or is it an adjustable rate?

SRF interest rates are set annually, based on a calculation using the 11-bond General Obligation Index with a minimum interest rate of 2.0%. Loan interest for repayment is based on the lower of the interest rate set at the time of the Original Loan Agreement or the rate at the time the loan is closed. For more information see <https://www.des.nh.gov/business-and-community/loans-and-grants/clean-water-state-revolving-fund>

Sewer (page 427) sludge removal budget. Why did numbers go down if costs are going up?

The FY23 adjustment is related to changes in the projected sludge volumes and costs for the Peirce Island WWTF and the Pease WWTF. The City now has a full operational year of the Peirce Island WWTF allowing for better estimates of operational costs. Updated projections resulted in a decrease of \$50,000 in the FY23 line item for Grit Removal (sludge). Projections for the Pease WWTF were increased by \$40,000 under line items for Grit Removal (sludge) and Grit and Grease Removal. Projected costs for Grit Disposal under the Collection Administration Portsmouth decreased by \$5,000. This resulted in a net reduction of \$15,000 which accounts for the difference in the total budget values between FY22 and FY23.

Sewer Fund (Page 435) performance measures for overflows are given for FY21, 22 - are these actuals or budgeted? Can you estimate FY 23?

FY20 and FY21 combined sewer overflow volumes were actual measured volumes. The FY22 value was estimated using the actual measured volumes through March 2022 and assuming an additional amount for the remainder of the fiscal year. This will be updated in next year's budget and is available each month on the City's website at:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/wastewater/combined-sewer-overflows-cso>

Are we doing any research on viruses in the discharge?

The City does not have a limit in their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) wastewater permits for viruses. The City is required to notify the State Department of Environmental Services Shellfish Program when there are periods of potentially high bacteria/viruses in the discharge of the effluent. The Shellfish Program is responsible for managing the shellfish harvesting activities in order to comply with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) administered through the Food and Drug Administration.