



Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

Dockets #0524-0531 FY22 Budget

Docket #0545 PEG Access Fund

Department of Innovation & Technology

Working Session: Friday, May 21, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Hearing: Thursday, June 3, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the Department of Innovation & Technology's budget at the Working Session on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Recording here: <https://youtu.be/Aml3Vd97nuA>

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

1. Verbally at the hearing on Thursday, June 3rd, at 10AM.
2. For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to June 3rd, 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 June 3rd, indicating how each question will be answered.

Department of Innovation & Technology Budget Questions

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:

- In terms of your FY21 stated goals, you had said it was a goal to reduce contracted services in FY21. But contracted services seem to have increased in FY21 and are budgeted for another increase in FY22. Please explain the reasons for this increase and why the goal wasn't achievable.
- Another goal of FY21 was an operational audit in FY21 to ensure DoIT has the optimal structure, staffing, and resources to accomplish its mission. Please explain the findings of this audit.
- It appears that many of the responsibilities of the department are increasing with new goals and investments. Do you have adequate staff and resources to carry out your work? What has your strategic planning been around prioritization given there has been so much growth in digital infrastructure?
- Regarding the surveillance oversight ordinance before the Council, there has been discussion about the work necessary to make it compatible with current City processes. Please provide an update on what resources would be needed if this passed and how you're thinking about this proposal and how something along these lines it would be implemented.
- Is Wicked Free WiFi the best approach for providing widespread free wifi for residents or should we be investing more in municipal broadband? It seems like



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municipal broadband is a heavy lift in the immediate term, but could then be a critical piece of City infrastructure for decades to come.

Councilor Liz Breadon asked:

- With an increase in cyber attacks on municipalities, where is DoIT in terms of cyber security? Please speak to your current resources and/or needed resources stand up a robust defense against attacks. What policies are in place in the event of an attack that holds us ransom?

Councilor Matt O'Malley asked:

- DoIT has done an amazing job as the City has advanced technologically over the past decade. I would like to hear about how we're going to continue to be as user friendly to citizens as we can, bringing more constituent services online (e.g. paying bills, requesting documents, etc.) How do we take technological advances we've made/adapted during the pandemic and make them permanent? Will this kind of expansion require more funding?

Councilor Ed Flynn asked:

- I was in a hearing recently with the Human Rights Commission talking about digital equity. We've seen this digital divide grow even deeper during the pandemic. What are the plans to expand free WiFi across the City, or municipal broadband? We need free WiFi in many residential areas, especially public housing developments and low income communities.
- What are the department's thoughts on municipal broadband?
- What grants are available to address digital equity and help low income families with procuring devices or internet. Who is eligible for help?