



# City of Malden

Malden City Hall  
215 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

## Meeting Minutes - Final Finance Committee

*Councillor McDonald, Chair*  
*Councillor Taylor, Vice Chair*  
*Councillor Condon*  
*Councillor Luong*  
*Councillor Sica*  
*Councillor Simonelli*

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Tuesday, June 2, 2026

6:00 PM

City Hall  
215 Pleasant Street  
Room 105  
Malden, MA 02148

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**Watch the meeting with Teams: <https://tinyurl.com/5yxt6zz9>**

A quorum of the City Council may be present at this meeting. While no formal votes or actions are anticipated by the City Council, members may participate in the discussion of topics listed on this agenda. This notice is filed to ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Law should a quorum of the parent body be present.

### Roll Call

**Present:** 4 - Carey McDonald, Ari Taylor, Michelle Luong and Jadeane Sica

**Absent:** 2 - Paul Condon and Chris Simonelli

Also Present: Council President Linehan, Councillors Colon Hayes, Crowe, O'Malley, Winslow  
Mayor Christenson  
Maria Luise-Special Assistant to the Mayor  
Charles Ranaghan-Controller/CFO  
Zaheer Samee-Assistant City Solicitor  
Dora St. Martin-Director Malden Public Library  
Dr. Timothy Sippel-Superintendent of Malden Public Schools  
Sharon Rose-Zeiberg-Member of Malden School Committee Finance Committee  
Daniel Grover-Treasurer  
Alex Pratt-Director of Office of Strategic Planning and Development

Councillor McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.  
There will be audio and video of this meeting via Teams.

### Minutes to be Approved

[283-26](#)

Minutes of May 26, 2026 to be approved.

**A motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Luong, that the Committee Minutes of May 26, 2026 to be approved. The motion carried by a**

unanimous vote.

## Business

### [233-26](#)

Order: The Mayor will submit the Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Appropriation Orders for the General Fund.

**Sponsors:** Carey McDonald

**Attachments:** [Mayor Christenson's Memo](#)

[Link to Proposed FY2027 Budget](#)

[FY 2027 Summary Report Expenditures by Department for DBB](#)

[Finance Schedule of Meetings](#)

[FY2027 Budget Overview May 4th 2026](#)

[FINAL FINANCE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE FOR DEPARTMENT MEETINGS FY27 PROPOSED BUDGET](#)

[Please read this as my public comment at the June 2nd Public Hearing 233-26](#)

[Comments for Open City Council Meeting Today 233-26](#)

[Finance Committee-Superintendent Presentation](#)

[Memo from CFO Reporting Error 6226](#)

[Mayor's Response to City Council Request to Amend the Budget](#)

[Revised Budget Appropriation FY27, as of June 4 2026](#)

*Councillor McDonald explained this is the last hearing with our department heads Dora St Martin, Library, Dr. Timothy Sippel, Superintendent, Malden Public Schools and Alex Pratt, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. They announced the Finance Committee will recess at 7:00 PM for the Committee of the Whole Meeting and conduct the Public Hearing of the Budget and we will reconvene for further discussion of the Finance Committee Meeting once the meeting is over. Dora St Martin, Director of Malden Public Library started with the Library FY27 Budget.*

*Dora St Martin, Director Malden Public Library said first she wanted to say is that we all expected that things were going to be a lot worse so she could say thank you. The idea of this budget was to maintain as much public forward facing and programs and services as we could and to make sure that we didn't have to cut library hours, which was not only affect some of our other revenue, but denied public access to their libraries. She explained that the primary goal for the FY2027 library budget was to preserve as many public programs and services as possible, specifically avoiding cuts to library hours, which would impact both revenue and public access. The library department implemented operational cuts by delaying certain expenditures, such as library binding, reducing office supply purchases, and selectively cutting online databases, while prioritizing essential services and leveraging state aid to maintain book services. She noted that 81% of the library budget is allocated to staff, limiting the scope for cuts, and acknowledged ongoing union impact bargaining for staff positions, which is being handled by the mayor's team. Since 2014, the library has raised approximately \$2.5 million through foundations, donors, fundraising, and grants, with programs like the summer reading initiative funded entirely by individual donors, and plans to continue these efforts.*

*Councillor McDonald asked Dora to verify if with this budget do we meet state minimum spending requirements for the Massachusetts Library Board?*

Mayor Christenson confirmed yes we will meet it.

Councillor McDonald welcomed Superintendent Sippel and let people know they could find the schools budget it is on the schools website.

Dr. Timothy Sippel, Superintendent Malden Public Schools shared his screen with a presentation (see attached). He started by explaining the school district's FY2027 budget totals \$102 million, with net school spending including \$27 million in municipal costs such as health insurance, retirement, and facilities, and is governed by Chapter 70 state law, which sets minimum spending requirements and funding formulas. A decline in student enrollment, particularly among English language learners, was noted as a factor affecting state aid, with foundation enrollment figures including students in Malden Public Schools and those attending other public schools, but excluding vocational and charter school students. The district anticipates 77 students in out-of-district placements, with tuition and transportation costs partially reimbursed through the circuit breaker program, though reimbursement only applies after certain thresholds and covers up to 75% of eligible expenses. A \$1.2 million error in health insurance reporting was identified and corrected, leading to amended budget submissions and implementation of internal control changes, as outlined in a memo from the CFO/controller, which will be shared with the council. The school department receives several federal and state grants, including Title I, IDEA, and circuit breaker funds, with recent changes in grant amounts due to programmatic adjustments and transitions between federal and state funding sources. The budget honors collective bargaining agreements with the Modern Education Association, including cost-of-living increases for teachers and support staff, and reallocates staffing based on enrollment and programmatic needs, particularly for students with disabilities.

Councillor McDonald asked Alex Pratt to share his budget highlights with the committee

Alex Pratt, Director of Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development and began by stating approximately 75% of department staff costs are covered by federal grants, and since the merger with the redevelopment authority in July 2021, the department has secured nearly \$50 million in grants, supporting programs such as housing rehab, down payment assistance, and community outreach. The department will not backfill a retiring clerk, requiring increased collaboration and reduced silos among remaining staff to maintain operations and resilience in the face of a smaller team. He also explained the department maintains separate budgets for CDBG, HOME, and other grant-funded projects, with annual action plans and budget details available on the department website, though grants outside the general fund are not included in the city's main budget documents.

Councillor Winslow said one of the things we have not had a transportation plan around staff consistently until the past two years. He thanks Mayor Christenson for putting that forward its a new addition to the budget over the last two years. What's the hope of having a transportation plan and making us more competitive for these important grants? What value does this raise?

Alex explained the 44 million in grants that we've brought in since July 21, about \$14 million of that have been competitive transportation grants, the addition of a transportation planner has enabled the department to secure \$14 million in competitive transportation grants, making the city more competitive for state and federal funding, and supporting projects such as Broadway and Greenway improvements.

*Councillor McDonald appreciates the point about the money they have brought in and asked Alex if he could provide them with the list of the competitive grants that OSPCD has helped us out to get in the last year*

*Alex said sure we can do that*

*Councillor Crowe said she noticed you have the City Budget at \$477,000 but what is the bottom line budget*

*Alex said if you're looking at how much we're spending annually, including on grants, that changes into the year or rehab program has a couple different grants that it allows on, I'd say on the staff side, you're looking at again, 1.1mill, if you're looking at our projects, you. 2 mill from CDBG, 2 million from home and another 2 million from the rehab program that varies from year to year and then when you're looking at the planning and everything on the side of the various all sort of river works project this year, I think we're spending 13 million projects in a year, which is a really big deal. That is all grants needed, but that's not a part of the year over year. it'll fluctuate.*

*Councillor McDonald explained just to highlight your point then, that if it's at 20, if you're distributing \$20 million to the benefits of the city and we're spending 400,000 out of the general fund then*

*\$20 million is coming into the City that is great. They clarified the proposed budget and the annual appropriation funds only covers the general Fund and other funds that the Council approves, so grants that we receive that are outside the general fund and outside our approval don't show up. We have to look separate for that.*

*Alex said so much of what we do is so much of what we do is there's grants It starts to overstate it. The grants number is 75% of our staff or more.*

*Councillor O'Malley addressed questions about increased communication and miscellaneous expenses*

*Alex clarified that communication includes ads and translation services, while miscellaneous covers payments to DEP, insurance, and other operational costs.*

*Councillor McDonald thanked Alex and stated the committee will now stand in recess at 7:12 PM and explained we will leave the Teams meeting on but we're going to turn off the camera and the sound.*

*Councillor McDonald reconvened the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:04 PM and asked the committee following that public hearing, is there any discussion or comments that folks want to raise, and then if folks would like to raise suggestions about changes and like to see now would be the time to do so.*

*Councillor Winslow considered offering discounts to residents who opt for electronic billing,*

*Dan Grover Treasurer clarified that legal obligations require mailing bills unless residents elect electronic delivery, and that charging for mailed bills is not permitted.*

*Councillor McDonald agreed to include electronic billing and mail reduction as a topic for future investigation, aiming to identify potential budgetable savings and efficiencies.*

*Councillor Winslow mentioned professional services in various offices which could be*

dedicated to language access. He also brought up the events they have taken a significant cut on such as 4th of July but there are also \$8,000 dedicated to public safety days maybe taking 50%. He mentions these are a few minor things in reach to fund language access funds.

Councillor Linehan was going to take a step back and take a larger higher view of what we heard and also from councillor's that could not be here. Councillors have reached out with me with a desire to be added back in with the linguistic support there are two in the building which are the language access position and then there's the public facing election support and constituent support. She also feels we need to discuss the Ward 4th of July bucket as well that Councillor Sica put in as a resolve we got a lot of community feedback that constituents didn't want to see the rollback of community services and ward services. She suggests cutting back on the amount was in there but not getting rid of them. None of these are fixing anything but putting a band aid on. We have a major problem ahead.

Councillor Taylor discussed restoring the city clerk position with a language access component, debated funding levels for Ward and at-large Councillors, and considered the impact of language access services on community engagement, culminating in a formal motion to request the Mayor restore these funds proposed allocation of \$7,500 for Ward Councillors and \$2,500 for Councillors-at-Large and for reallocating professional services funds \$40,000 to support language access in the City Clerk's Office \$107,500 total. She would also like to see us really focus on kind of those smaller ways that we can recoup some of the money and looking at other areas to save possibly if we need to look at raising fees, fines or things like that which will help us go forward.

The following motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Luong, on behalf of the Finance Committee, formally request the Mayor consider the following changes: adding back in the language access component in the City Clerk's Office \$40,000 and also restore some of the City Council funds: \$7,500 for Ward Councillors and \$2,500 for Councillors-at-Large. The motion carried by a unanimous vote totaling \$107,500.00 Roll Call Vote: Taylor-yes Sica-yes Luong-yes McDonald-yes Passes 4/0

Councillor Sica mentioned she put in the motion to resolve the 4th of July funds so she wouldn't agree to that but would like to approve putting back the funds for the language access position in the Clerk's Office.

Councillor Crowe discussed whether the clerk's job description should be updated to reflect expanded responsibilities

Carol Ann highlighted the importance of language access for community meetings and constituent services, noting that the clerk, Anna, provides translation in multiple Asian dialects and supports outreach to isolated communities. She also clarified that Anna is a contract employee working 17 hours per week, and acknowledgment of state mandates requiring translation of certain documents. Existing systems for translation include language lines, vendor services, and multilingual staff, with the clerk coordinating and facilitating access to these resources, especially for public-facing departments.

Councillor Luong explained in Ward 7 her services have been irreplaceable where we have a large Asian Population. She asks what systems have been put in place to replace the other language access position

Maria said we have language lines, pocket talks, vendors for translations, most departments have been trained and know these resources are available. Dan and

*Kamala and those the two offices that are most public facing that have most foot traffic during the day.*

*Carol Ann said we don't have to go very far for language access on the second floor. Ana is very good with the outreach and just knowing how to find the resources, we actually see people in the Chinese community that will plan their trip to City Hall.*

*Councillor Crowe asked if there are limitations to the mitigation funds are there any restrictions of things you couldn't use them for.*

*Chuck explained mitigation funds are restricted to capital improvements such as trees, benches, and playground equipment, and cannot be used for community events, with availability varying by ward and recent allocations being unpredictable. Ward improvement funds are different they can be use for Wards events. Mitigation funds can only be used for capital improvements.*

*Councillor McDonald said from the Chair they are willing to support this.*

*Councillor Linehan mentioned the Community Connections grant was identified as a resource to support community organizations and events, supplementing ward funds and enabling broader community engagement.*

*Councillor McDonald asked if there were any other proposals*

*Councillor Sica made the following recommendation would be the gardner for \$17,100 she said Julie does wonderful things in the Community Garden but she also has volunteers who help her with the community fridges. She also has residents who help by volunteering behind the scenes. She would hope Julie would still stay on but suggests having students from the High School to help her out. She is just stating for the record that might be a line item we can look at. It's a small amount but could bridge a little of the gap.*

*Councillor Winslow discussed the potential for creating a nonprofit organization to support community gardening and fridge programs, drawing on examples from other communities and emphasizing the need for sustainable funding beyond ward allocations.*

*Councillor thanked everyone and stated we will be convening in finance and expect this to be on the floor so that you can think about next week prior to the Full Council Meeting.*

The committee will continue discussion of the FY/27 Proposed Budget with the following Departments:

Dora St Martin-Director, Malden Public Library  
Alex Pratt-Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Development  
Dr. Timothy Sippel-Superintendent, Malden Public Schools  
Jen Spadafora-Finance Chair, Malden School Committee  
Other departments and budget areas as needed

The Committee will recess at 7 pm for the budget public hearing. Following the public hearing, the Finance Committee may reconvene to consider a vote on amendments or motions proposed for the FY/27 Appropriation Order.

## **Adjournment**

**A motion was made by Councillor Sica, seconded by Councillor Taylor, that this meeting be adjourned at 9:52 PM.. The motion carried unanimously.**

If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Maria Luise, ADA Compliance Coordinator at [mluise@cityofmalden.org](mailto:mluise@cityofmalden.org) or 781-397-7000 Ext. 2005

For instructions on enabling live translated captions in Teams, please visit:  
[www.cityofmalden.org/captions](http://www.cityofmalden.org/captions)