



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

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

6:00 PM

215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Watch the meeting with Teams: <https://tinyurl.com/3ta7yw4j>

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: 6 - Carey McDonald, Ari Taylor, Paul Condon, Michelle Luong, Jadeane Sica and Chris Simonelli

Also Present: Council President Linehan, Councillors Crowe, O'Malley, Winslow
Councillor Colon Hayes via Teams
Mayor Gary Christenson
Maria Luise, Special Assistant to the Mayor
Charles Ranaghan-CFO/Controller
Ron Hogan-Chief Strategy Officer
Chief Glenn Cronin-Police
Barbara Murphy-Police Commissioner
Chief Stephen Froio-Fire
Yem Lip-Director of Engineering
Mike Neville-Director of Water
Chris Rosa-Cemetery Superintendent
Paul Myers-Acting DPW Director

Councillor McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.
There will be audio and video of this meeting via Teams.

Minutes to be Approved

[260-26](#)

Minutes of May 5, 2026 to be approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Luong, that the Committee Minutes of May 5, 2026 be tabled. 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](#)

Councillor McDonald welcomed everybody to the first of our Finance Committee, in-depth discussions with our department heads. We want to make sure we have a chance to talk to all of our department heads and so rather than have them all come in tiny little slots, I just tried to match them together with Lisa, Clerk of Committees in similar areas and then in advance of the meeting sent each of the department heads 2 very basic questions that we want to start by asking; 1. What impact the cuts and changes in their budgets will have, and how they're managing that and 2. Are there ideas they have for the future and their departments to improve our financial situation. The hope would be that for each of our blocks here we can invite our department heads to share their thoughts on that and then go the thoughts we'd like to share and then we'll open it up for questions and discussion. The first block was Public Safety; Chief Cronin Police and Commissioner Murphy, Chief Froio, Fire and Ron Hogan, Parking Department. The second block will be Paul Myers, Acting Director DPW, Chris Rosa, Cemetery Superintendent, Mike Neville, Director Water Dept., Yem Lip, Director Engineering. Councillor McDonald thanked Mayor Christenson for joining the Finance Committee Meeting this evening.

Chief Cronin thanked the Chair and the Finance Committee for having him at the meeting. He explained that the most significant impact of the budget cuts would be slower response times, as fewer officers and the loss of cadets would require shifting personnel and potentially leaving the station unmanned at times, which could affect public safety and service quality. The department will lose 3 full-time cadet positions, which previously helped with administrative tasks and supported officers, leading to increased strain on remaining staff and potentially degraded service for residents seeking assistance at the station and said this is devastating. Since 2019, police overtime has increased by 63%, with the hours remaining relatively stable but costs rising due to higher pay rates; Chief Cronin discussed how Malden operates with fewer officers per capita compared to state averages and neighboring cities, highlighting the challenge of maintaining service levels. The Police Department relies on annual grants, including staffing and 911 training grants, to offset some costs, but these are not guaranteed and cannot fully compensate for staffing reductions. Malden is the 15th busiest 911 terminal in the state we are in the top 5% busy terminals in the state. Malden does more than yearly, 50,000 calls for service, Somerville does 37,000 calls for service. We have more 911 calls than Somerville. Obviously I didn't want to get rid of anybody because it affects my moral. I have no other choice. I cannot do it without the police officer because I have to have offices to respond to calls. Chief Cronin clarified that laid-off officers would not be replaced by overtime hires, emphasizing the integrity of staffing

decisions and dispelling rumors about replacing full-time positions with overtime. These are the most serious impacts from his point of view. He also addressed hearing that he was going to replace the laid off cadets with Police Officers. They were going to lay off cadets and pay Police Officers overtime to replace them. That will never happen it would be disingenuous of him to do something like that it's never going to happen.

Councillor Simonelli we really need to start working with the executive branch to make this as painless as possible. He has worked with Police, Fire, DPW and throws out caution. If you look at 10, 20 years ago we have lost a lot of officers by attrition and now losing cadets. He mentions his neighborhood relies on the Police Dept. and they have been great. We need to start looking at the general fund to keep these people afloat. He said he doesn't have all the answers but the first line of defense is important.

Council President Linehan asked about when folks come into the station in an emergency situation and there is nobody there what are we doing to follow up or address that. Do we have a camera or something monitoring what is happening in the lobby?

Chief Cronin said we would always do our best to get someone out there even if they go out and say just hold on a minute. What we typically do in a situation is I'm going have to move a lot of chess pieces around because I have to have three people, so on all shifts there are two police officers in the 911 call center and on day early shifts there was also a cadet. Cadets don't work on midnight shifts, so they are there for that reason, but I will be doing everything in my power to have a third officer there so the wait won't be that long. They can see from where they are who is out there through the glass.

Councillor O'Malley so the three patrol positions are those open positions or are the positions that are already filled open and are the cadets coming out of the police administration salaries? Since 2019, Police Overtime has increased 63% so \$270,000 do you do you think there's any way we can try to get overtime?

Chief Cronin said yes the three patrol positions are open and they are coming out of administrative salaries. He answered to the overtime questions there's no way of knowing that, but the overtime has increased the amount that gets paid for overtime so the hours are relatively the same.

Councillor Crowe feels this is not the way you want to go but thinks short term are there any safety grants or federal safety grants that we can help with.

Chief Cronin said we're actually looking to more right now annually we receive staffing grants, 911 training grants and a few others to help us so we do rely on also every year and complete them every year.

Councillor Luong asked what else can people expect across the City other than at the Police Station for response times. What is the average now for response time?

Chief Cronin said they are all different but we have an extremely effective efficient response rate because Malden of course is so dense. We have officers in the sector, so I wouldn't be able to really answer how long it would take because it all depends on the circumstances. There's so many variables.

Chief Froio explained the Fire Department will lose supervisory positions in dispatch, resulting in only one dispatcher on duty for most hours, which falls below recommended standards for call volume and may strain operations. The impacts are going to be quite a certain amount of straining hours for a year, and so as we move people around the

training department this may impact our rating. We have almost 11,000 calls every standard says anything over 8000 should have two people in dispatch. We had one 24 hours a day and eight hours a day would have a supervisor in there with them and now we're losing that supervisor. So we're well under that standard. The department is moving towards more in-house maintenance and has paid off some leased equipment, but ongoing costs for repairs and upgrades, such as out-of-warranty safety gear, remain significant. We don't bring much revenue and we're at bare minimum now so we're well under staffing as it is. Our staffing should be about 1.71 per 8000 thousand residents we are at 1.2. Overtime costs have increased by 114% since 2019, partly due to an arbitration award that rolled separate wage ordinances into base pay, affecting overtime calculations and leading to higher expenditures. The Fire Department receives grants similar to the Police Department, including staffing and public safety grants, which help offset overtime and operational costs but are not sufficient to prevent layoffs. Staffing reductions are being managed through attrition and ongoing discussions with the union, with some positions still in play and subject to further negotiation.

Councillor Winslow asked about the 4 positions are they layoffs or unfilled positions and are you having discussion with the union on that

Chief Froio said they are not unfilled we are hoping attrition or layoffs and they are ongoing discussions with the union.

Councillor O'Malley mentioned the cost of over time has increased 114% in the amount of \$425,000.

I'm assuming some of that has to do with increased salary rates that you have to pay out. Has there also been increased overtime time hours?

Chief Froio said overtime hours are pretty stagnant. Some of that is that we were under funded on overtime.

Chuck mentioned both Police and Fire receive funds from the executive Office of Safety every year and the 911 and staffing grant funding that can be used to offset overtime costs and things of that nature.

Councillor McDonald asked Chief Cronin, if I may, just to clarify the difference for folks who don't know between over time and details, over time is directed by your supervisor or by the department to fulfill specific department needs and expectations, and that's what shows within the city budget. Details are privately paid while they are administered by the city and we actually do get a little work for that so more details help the budget but we the city taxpayers don't pay the cost they might if its indirect from another project and they are voluntary

Chief Cronin said yes the city actually benefits from almost \$500,000/yr

Mayor Christenson said that is the first thing our team looked at just cut operating cost first but we know it would be disingenuous if you look at the run rates and you factor in all the unknowns, vacations, FMLA, injuries, military deployments, it just would have been a not truthful budget. So we did not even go down that road as much as we wanted to and as easy as it would have been it just would have been disingenuous.

Ron Hogan said obviously, I had a bird's eye view on the situation for the last half a dozen years, you know had an honest conversation about the fact that unfortunately, I don't see this to be a one year thing. I think this is going to be a multi year effort by the city with their additional revenue sources to bring expenses down. So when we started the

exercise, when we talked about my department I did tell the mayor that it would be my preference that instead of cutting somebody from the staff or somebody writing tickets that the totality of my role will be eliminated at the end of the year as you all see in the budget with responsibilities to be redistributed among other staff and departments, ensuring continuity and proper documentation during the transition. The department generates about \$1 million in parking revenue and \$400,000 from parking meters annually; while increasing fines or rates could boost revenue, the city prefers to use fines to encourage compliance rather than as a primary revenue source.

Councillor Linehan said one question I get asked a lot is why we don't have the kind of smart meters or the parking apps? Is that something again, recognizing that we have a budget gap, but is that something that we could potentially have on the horizon and does that? Maybe make us more money, or even if it's a one time investment upfront. Is that something we're thinking about?

Ron said the department has focused on encouraging short-term parking and utilizing garages for longer stays, balancing revenue generation with the goal of supporting local businesses and maintaining accessibility.

Chris Rosa, Cemetery Supervisor said we are level funded, but we're a little bit different than any other department city because we do have perpetual care that kind of supplements a portion of our salaries, so the only way the department's going to be impacted was through the loss of the administrative assistant in the office. Given the current situation he will do the best he can to keep the services going. He is not just the cemetery director and wears a lot of hats but will do what he has to, to keep the cemetery running smoothly. What he has done over the years he has been there is to eliminate a lot of what he thought were unnecessary expenses and he has been able to run the cemetery as lean as possible.

Councillor McDonald asked if he could share some of what you were able to secure.

Chris said he will still apply for grants. He also said Paul, Acting DPW Director is helping him with the first round of planting trees taking on some of the responsibility. In the 3 1/2 years as tree warden not including the CPC grant from the repairing of the walls at Forestdale Cemetery, he has brought in \$700,000 in tree money. The city hasn't had any money on trees or supplies. He feels in a few days he may be receiving \$75,000 for tree planting and there are two more grants pending.

Paul Myers, Acting DPW Director said the one position we are losing is the Assistant DPW Director, which was his position. He mentioned this position to the Mayor and Maria and felt it was the most logical decision. The previous Director Bob Knox brought back the general foreman's position. So instead of having the assistant director with two supervisors, we now have two supervisors with a general foreman. I'm trying to designate more responsibility to the supervisors and general foreman. The Public Works, Parks and Highway Department which he oversees have been bare minimum for years. We are constantly juggling not being able to hire people. We are able to shuffle guys around from parks and highway if they need help constantly interchanging guys to go help out in various departments. So losing the Assistant Director position is not going to hurt us.

Chris Rosa said at this particular time in the City we have a really good group of Department Heads and me, Paul, Mike Neville are there for each other, whether it be snow plowing, weed whacking cemetery, whatever it is we kind of pool our resources and we find a way to work together.

Councillor Luong asked how the budget will impact not being able to purchase new equipment

Paul said we have been lucky to hire a great mechanic who maintains the equipment and everything is done in house which enables us to save money to not have to sent the equipment out for maintenance. We always wish we could buy new equipment but we make due with what we have and operate within the budget.

Councillor Winslow asked about waste management and the cost continuing to go up also the demand from the residents to have more inspections to keep people keeping their trash in the bins or not putting off book bags. How is this budget affecting that ?

Paul said they recently promoted Jody Landwick, to Solid Waste Coordinator who is out there issuing violations and dropping pamphlets off. We're trying to get the bags off the off the sidewalks now and have everyone put everything in barrels. We're issuing a lot more fines now when we're not being as lenient with the violation. If you continue to break the law or the policies for trash, we're going to issue fines of \$300.00. We are staying on top of that and Jody is a great asset to have.

Councillor Crowe asked is there any way to offset the over time people have to be doing picking up the trash

Paul said we have a contact person for the trash company if they miss trash if they can't get to it we always go to retrieve it. It's a challenge.

Chuck said to follow up on what Paul just said during the strike, when Republic wasn't picking up trash, when they when they weren't doing anything, the city spent hours, multiple hours going back and forth.

With the public to try and reduce overtime costs, disposal costs, services that we had to provide because of their lack of service and we did it. We worked with Ron myself, Legal, the Mayor, Maria, Bobby Knox. We spent a long time and I think we got a pretty good deal. This budget does reflect all the new contractual increases with Republic that this year kicked in a small increase and we're currently working with Republic on a new prevailing wage rate that through the Commonwealth of Mass they are required to pay their employees.

Councillor O'Malley asked Paul about the DPW Highway salaries going down and I'm assuming it might have something to do with the elimination of this assistant of the assistant director

Paul said yes of the assistant director and we have a few vacant positions that we haven't filled either and that would factor in also.

Councillor McDonald asks Yem to tell them about any changes in your departments and what the impacts of those might be.

Yem Lip, Engineering Director, the engineering department has shifted half of a position to be funded by a \$10 million EPA grant, with additional grants totaling \$16 million over three years, supporting salaries and project oversight. I'm very proud of what my department achieves every year. We are able to do more work in house, doing more project oversights in house.

Councillor McDonald said to the question about grants you have brought in a significant number of grants in the last few years, can you give us a ballpark figure for the past

three years?

Yem said with various grants a total of \$16mill. to help eliminate the lead lines. Also the 25% grant and 75% interest loan for lead lines.

Councillor Winslow asked about unfortunately eliminating the language access person and would that impact his department.

Yem said he is fortunate to have employees in the office that speak other languages.

Councillor McDonald said from the Chair the half of position is half of a full-time employee. Is there a possibility of shifting more of that person into the grant or partial of another person's salary and would you be able to take look at that.

Yem said that is correct but the shift is not allowed in the grant. Possibly could shift partial of another person's salary and he will take a look at that.

Mike Neville, Director of Water the Water Department is funded through the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund, with indirect costs for administrative support calculated annually and applied to the budget, ensuring proper allocation of resources. DPW and Water Department employees who obtain water licenses are eligible for contractual stipends, and staffing remains stable due to the separate funding structure. We've been watching the engineering part. We do some leak detection monitors so we can get ahead of our leaks because one loss is kind of huge hit for us.

Councillor McDonald said the reason you are not losing employees is because your department is separately funded through the Waterfront Fund and paid by our water bills. It doesn't help reducing positions in your department to close the budget gap.

The Finance Committee will continue discussion of the FY27 Proposed Budget with the following Departments:

Chief Stephen Froio-Fire Department
Chief Glenn Cronin-Police Department
Ron Hogan-Chief Strategy Officer
Yem Lip-Director Engineering
Paul Myers-Acting Director of DPW
Mike Neville-Director Water Department
Chris Rosa-Cemetery Superintendent

Other Business

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councillor Luong, seconded by Councillor Taylor, that this meeting be adjourned at 7:15 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

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