



# 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, May 5, 2026

6:00 PM

City Hall, Room 105  
215 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

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**Watch the meeting with Teams: <https://tinyurl.com/yc3zy7pv>**

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.

**Present:** 5 - Carey McDonald, Ari Taylor, Paul Condon, Michelle Luong and Jadeane Sica

**Absent:** 1 - Chris Simonelli

### Roll Call

Also Present: Council President Linehan, Councillors Colon Hayes, Crowe, Winslow  
Councillor O'Malley via Teams  
Mayor Gary Christenson  
Maria Luise-Special Assistant to the Mayor  
Charles Ranaghan-CFO/Controller  
Dan Grover-Treasurer  
Zaheer Samee-Assistant City Solicitor  
Carol Ann Desiderio-City Clerk

Councillor McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.  
There will be audio and video of this meeting via Teams.

### Minutes to be Approved

[237-26](#)

Minutes of April 28, 2026 to be approved.

**A motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Sica, that the Committee Minutes of April 28, 2026 be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

### Business

The Administrative Financial Team will meet with the Finance Committee to discuss the F/Y 2027 Budget.

[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 explained that the Mayor and the Financial Team are joining the meeting to give a presentation on the budget. Charles Ranaghan, CFO/Controller shared a presentation with the Finance Committee on the F/Y Proposed Budget. (see attached)*

*Chuck thanked the Finance Committee for having them to the Finance Committee Meeting and explained in the past years the first meeting is a high level overview of revenue expected and some of the higher level issues with this FY27 Budget. Some of the talking points: Structural pressure still remains. This year is the first year since we've received ARPA funding that we no longer have the ability to use it. Last year we used \$3.3 million in ARPA funding this year, we're not using any. School funding and health insurance are two of the major drivers causing the deficit that we have and sustainability concerns. Mayor Christensen has mentioned several times since we've started this budget process, this isn't a one year fix to get to a structurally balanced budget this is going to be a multi year effort. This proposal for FY27 is phase one of what's mostly going to be a multi year process. He explained that property taxes are projected to make up about 50% of the budget, state aid accounts for 37%, and local receipts such as motor vehicle excise, cannabis excise, meals and hotel excise, and building permits contribute 8.8%. Other financing sources, including free cash and water/sewer indirect costs, bring the total estimated revenue to \$240,335,500 for FY2027. He discussed the use of \$5.2 million in free cash for the FY2027 budget, the same amount as FY2026, noting that ARPA funds are no longer available. The decision was made after extensive meetings, balancing the need to avoid deeper cuts with the goal of reducing reliance on reserves. State aid is estimated at \$89 million, with excise taxes at \$7 million. Local receipts include solid waste revenues, parking tickets, and building permits, with solid waste revenue remaining consistent and building permits estimated at \$1.65 million, reflecting an extra \$100,000 from permitting and compliance fees.*

*Mayor Christenson and Chuck emphasized that achieving a structurally balanced budget will require a multi-year effort, with FY2027 representing phase one. The team plans to recommend segregating reserves for specific purposes, such as snow and ice removal and one-time capital expenses, to improve budget sustainability.*

*Chuck continued with his presentation and explained the school department is allocated \$102 million, making it the largest cost center in the budget, driven by mandates and contracts. The city must fully fund education to avoid state aid interception, limiting flexibility in other areas. Health insurance is estimated at \$28.9 million, with the city transitioning to the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) to leverage larger group rates.*

*Final savings and actual costs will be known by June 2nd, pending completion of retiree and employee enrollments. Police and fire departments are each allocated about \$14-15 million. The budget includes proposals for layoffs and reductions, with ongoing negotiations to minimize impacts and explore creative solutions such as incentivizing early retirements. Retirement is budgeted at \$16 million, and DPW at \$9.5 million. The DPW budget includes appropriations for snow removal, with \$200,000 for annual expenses and \$800,000 for prior year deficits due to heavy storms.*

*The internal team, with input from department heads and analysis of vacant positions, arrived at layoff proposals by matching budget constraints with operational needs. The process was not exact, and efforts were made to minimize layoffs by collapsing responsibilities and targeting vacancies. Negotiations with Teamsters Local 25 began to address the impact of layoffs, including bumping rights based on seniority and qualifications. The union is holding meetings to determine which members may be interested in bumping into less senior positions. The fire department has been proactive in seeking creative solutions to avoid layoffs, such as incentivizing early retirements. Each union negotiation is unique, but the shared goal is to prevent physical layoffs while achieving necessary budget savings. Four cadets are slated for potential layoffs, with one vacancy unfilled. Cadets are part of Local 25 and may exercise bumping rights if qualified. The police chief confirmed that cadet functions can be absorbed by patrol officers without additional overtime costs. The budget proposes 17 general government layoffs, including both open positions and current staff. Vacancies such as the DPW director and a clerk in the assessor's office are targeted for elimination, with further details to be provided via email. The FY2027 budget includes a proposed 0% cost of living adjustment for all bargaining units, with the intention to negotiate this with unions. Employees with unsettled contracts for FY2025 and FY2026 will be made whole, but no incremental increases are budgeted for FY2027. Salary reserves in the controller's office budget are set aside for unsettled contracts from FY2025 and FY2026. Departmental salary budgets include funds for signed contracts, ensuring that any agreed-upon increases are already built into departmental allocations. If unions reach impasse, such as police and fire, arbitration may result in mandated increases. The city would then need to decide whether to fund those increases or make additional cuts to accommodate them. The House budget increased Chapter 70 funds by \$567,000 but decreased charter tuition reimbursement and unrestricted local aid, resulting in a net cut of \$93,000. The Senate is expected to restore and possibly increase unrestricted local aid, but the final impact remains uncertain.*

*Questions were raised about declining student enrollment and its effect on funding. FY2027 estimates are based on prior year enrollment, with the October count determining future allocations. The school department will provide more detailed demographic and enrollment data when available.*

*The House budget included a proposed reserve for districts losing English language learners, but this is not reflected in the Senate budget. The team confirmed that current revenue estimates do not account for this potential reserve.*

*Councillor Luong asked when are the trash contracts up*

*Chuck said in 5 years*

*Councillor McDonald said from the Chair we will hear from the departments about the impacts of the cuts to their individual budgets and asked Chuck if there is anything he wanted to say about how you arrived at the at the layoff proposals that are included in this budget? Like, did you ask departments to give us recommendations and then go*

from there? We will get their perspectives but asked if there is anything you want to say about your perspective about how you arrive at this set of 17 general government layoffs on top of the police requirement.

Mayor Christenson I think the best way to describe it is that it was not an exact science you had our internal team. You had the numbers that you're dealing with from the governor and the house and now the Senate. We had all the department heads in. So when you match it all up, that's how we arrived where we did. We looked as much as possible, obviously for vacant positions. We also looked at where responsibility could be collapsed and then you know what we have nowhere else to go. We get out right layoffs. But a common theme throughout the past month is we had to drive that reserve number down. That is an absolute essential and I feel not 100%, but we are going in the right direction by lowering it from 8.4 million to 5.2 million but with the caveat we still don't know what's going to end up on Beacon Hill, and we don't know what's going to happen with enrollments. As Chuck outlined we do have a line item for 0% cost of living for next year. So there's a lot of what ifs, but it is our determination to get that use of reserves under control. As a matter of fact, the team is going to recommend to you all in the fall that we start to segregate some of those reserves into appropriate categories. So for instance, Councillor Winslow just brought up snow and ice it's always been part of the overall budget, but we're going to recommend to you that within our reserves, a certain amount should be designated for snow and ice. A certain amount should be designated for one time capital certain amount should be designated etcetera, etcetera.

Councillor McDonald said I just want to say from the Chair, I welcome that conversation. I think it's a little overdue to try to bring a little more logic to those reserves so they are not misconstrued as a big target and asked one more question in the 17 general government layoffs listed are those all layoffs or are some of those open positions?

Mayor Christenson answered both some opened.

Councillor McDonald asked if they could let them know which is an open position?

Maria Luise said we did speak with Dept. Heads and none of them wanted to leave we got as much input as we could but it was difficult but at the end we had to make cuts.

Mayor Christenson said he loves to spend however, when it's not there it's not there that's not what we drew off. If you saw the reaction it is something we won't forget for a long time it was awful.

Chuck said just to piggyback off of some of the positions, the DPW director, the vacancy that would result from that would be one of the vacancies that we're proposing eliminating, there is also a clerk position in the assessor's office that recently retired and are proposing a limited staff position, there's a recent Human Services Retirement, Treasurer's office had a recent retirement

Councillor McDonald asked for an email indicating which are opened positions.

Mayor Christenson added he wanted to remind everyone if nothing changes next year, we'll be doing the same exact thing we're going to have to deal with this because we don't see anything changing up here so we should all be prepared to be having the same discussion we did this year again next year is our hunch.

Councillor McDonald said on that honest but not cheerful note thank you for being here tonight.

## Other Business

### Adjournment

**A motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Sica, that this meeting be adjourned at 7:01 PM. The motion carried unanimously.**

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

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[www.cityofmaiden.org/captions](http://www.cityofmaiden.org/captions)