



City of Malden

Malden City Hall
215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Meeting Minutes - Final Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

5:30 PM

John & Christina Markey Community Center,
7 Washington St.

Roll Call

Present: 4 - David Camell, Paul Condon, Amanda Linehan and Deborah DeMaria

Absent: 2 - Neal Anderson and Barbara Murphy

Also Present: Councillors Sica and Crowe
Charles Ranaghan, Controller
Ron Cochran, Communications Director

Minutes to be Approved

Finance Minutes from June 18, 2019 to be approved.

Finance Minutes from February 4, 2020 to be approved.

Citizens Engagement Minutes from December 12, 2019 to be approved

Citizens Engagement Minutes from February 4, 2020 to be approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Deborah DeMaria, seconded by Councillor Paul Condon, that the Finance minutes of June 18, 2019 and February 4, 2020 and Citizen Engagement minutes of December 12, 2019 and February 4, 2020 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Business

NOTE: This will be a Joint Finance and Citizens Engagement Meeting.

[59-20](#)

Committee Report: Citizens Engagement. Committee recommends that the City Council begin translating, and posting on Granicus both Council dockets and minutes using the seven most needed languages in addition to English; Arabic, Cantonese, Haitian-Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese) through the services of Bay State Translators. As the funding source, it is recommended the council utilize account (0010-111-5300) of which no funds have been spent to date this year, holding a \$10,000 balance.

A motion was made by Councillor Linehan, seconded by Councillor Condon, that the Committee Report be tabled. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Other Business

The Joint Finance/Citizens Engagement Meeting was called to order at 5:40 P.M. The joint committees continue the discussion on translation services to be provided for Granicus documents. Paper #59-20 was read into the record by Councillor Camell. Councillor DeMaria explains the paper was sent to this joint Citizens Engagemnet/Finance meeting as alot of the concerns were financial and reminds the committe this is just a pilot program using a line item fund which could be used. Councillor DeMaria says there was alot of concern having it translated in all those languages and the funds may be depleted in a month. Her recommendation from the Chair of Citizens Engagement is to offer this on demand and have it translated in the key languages. She asks Ron Cochran to explain his thoughts with the process of that. Ron says he agrees with a pilot program and says this process is similar to one that we have on our city website. There is something at the footer of the website which invites residents to request questions and information to be translated which is available in five different languages. The process on the website is if you needed something translated you were able to ask in your native language on the site. He receives these requests and uses google translate to get an idea of what they are asking for. Google translate is a machine translation not contextual translation. He takes that request and reaches out to the resident and he feels they actually can relay their message better than they expect and will also have Baystate available if he needs to conference them in for a translation over the phone. He is usually able to resolve these in about 10 to 15 minutes. Councillor DeMaria asks whats the wish of the committee do we go with seven languages that we discussed. Councillor Linehan says these seven languages is what BayState told them they used in the schools. Councillor Condon says you have five languages on the website and asks if they log anything and how many do you average a week. Ron says the volume is low three or four a month for those five languages and he hasnt had a repeat request from one resident. He also says he would be able to implement this in a simple way for the Clerk of Committees by publishing the documents to our website which are requested. Councillor Linehan asks if he is tracking the data and what are the languages of origins of the requests. Ron says he thinks the potential to do that is there because they use google. He hasnt tracked what language is coming in because the volume is so low but feels he could run a report to show that. Facebook allows you to post in your native language so he could do that also. Councillor DeMaria says reviewing so far there is no cost and easy to gather the request and get it to our clerk she refers to the Controller for the financial part. Chuck went into granicus and ran the entire fiscal year with the number of words on the agenda and the number of words in the minutes July 23rd to February 11th. The word count ads up quick and the amount would be \$3,800 for the first eight months. Councillor Camell says could we just publish the agenda or a shortened version just so that people can understand. This number is based on just City Council dockets and agendas not committee meetings. Councillor DeMaria says this is for eight months and is under \$4,000 and reiterates this is only upon request.

Councillor Camell says this would be on demand we are not sure how often this money could last all year or run out quickly. Councillor DeMaria says this is just a pilot program for four months which then we could come back and look at the numbers. Councillor Sica says the spirit of this debate is wonderful but she feels they are underestimating the fact that someone may ask for everything to be translated in all languages every week. Councillor Camell says we are saying \$10,000 or four months whichever comes first. If we use it up quickly then we see the need is great for translation. Councillor Sica did some research and she says Ron mentions that google translate is not the best but we are talking about minutes and agendas. She suggests instead of going through Baystate lets use google translate for the pilot which costs nothing. Mr. Cochran could show Lisa how to get the requests and google translate there are over 100 languages in google translate. Councillor Camell asks could we get some test documents and have someone see how close the translation is or suggest maybe make the cap \$2000 instead of \$10,000 or perhaps limit the languages down to two or three. He says he understands there are hurdles to get over but we need to try to be creative in our plans here. Councillor Sica is suggesting residents reach out to our Clerk of Committees and have her translate with google translate for the constituent it takes 3 minutes. Councillor DeMaria says she thinks google translate is great for a word not a whole document. She says maybe go back to the original though of simple Chinese which is about 35-40% Asian in Malden and start there and see if there is a request and try that for the four months if we go over maybe add something to the ordinance. She is concerned with google translate. Councillor Sica suggests using google translate in all seven languages and see how correct it is. Councillor Camell says maybe only set the limit for \$5,000 and get a comparison of the google translate and assess the accuracy of that for now before passing this paper. Ron also says you functionally dont have to restrict to certain languages if you are refining your language you should discuss what you are publishing on your docket. Councilor DeMaria says we are looking to get a comparison to take one of our minutes to see what google translate can do and offer it to someone who speaks the language and see how close. Councillor Linehan asks if we are doing that for free. Councillor DeMaria says that should come out of our fund. The committee decides to table this paper for another week. Councillor DeMaria suggests still going forward with the comparison. She says as the Chair of Citizens Engagement if we were to do a comparative price she would be willing to fund that to push this forward for a simple test she would be able to fund that some way and bring it back to the meeting. Councillor Camell says who does that. Councillor DeMaria says we have a resident who speaks seven languages and she would be more than happy the cost that it incurs to move forward. The following motion was made: Motion to table Paper #59-20 was made by Councillor Linehan and seconded by Councillor Condon. All were in favor. Motion to adjourn was made by Councillor DeMaria and seconded by Councillor Condon. All were in favor.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councillor Deborah DeMaria, seconded by Councillor Paul Condon, that this meeting was adjourned at 6:19 P.M. The motion carried unanimously.