



City of Malden

Massachusetts



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To my esteemed Council Colleagues,

I want to thank you again for entrusting me with the Council Presidency for the remainder of this year. It is my hope to continue earning your trust by leading us with a sense of clear purpose and mutual respect, and I hope you'll hold me accountable to the goals that we set together.

It is said we go farther together but faster alone, and in that spirit, I invite you to continue the intention that Councillor O'Malley set for us in January when he asked us to spend this session uplifting one another by sharing goals and communicating as colleagues all year. I hope you will join me in recommitting to our work by remembering the values that first drew us to public service and calling on those values to motivate us as we look to the future.

Below, I plan to briefly outline my priorities heading into our summer recess and into fall, and I encourage each of you to reach out to me with any questions or additional ideas. Though I know we all work hard throughout July and August, I do look forward to a brief season of reflection and reset as we break from weekly meetings and I hope to have an opportunity to meet with each of you as we prepare for September and the rest of our Council session. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these priorities and again, I welcome your feedback.

Committees

I believe our current Committee structure is well-functioning and conducting business on time, and as such I plan to make very limited changes. I want to emphasize that I want to make sure we do not lose momentum on our very successful shift toward hybrid meetings, which I believe has become a model for other city boards and commissions. The first small change I'm making is a reorganization of the Personnel & Appointments Committee as follows:

PERSONNEL & APPOINTMENTS

Chair: Councillor Crowe

Vice Chair: Councillor Taylor

Members: Condon, Colón Hayes, Linehan

The second change that I'd like to make will be to appoint the special committee this Council voted to create last week to clarify our relationship with the Library Board of Trustees. I'd like to invite members to express interest in this committee by emailing me over the next few weeks before I decide on the final slate. The work of this **Ad Hoc Library Committee** will include, as paper 306-25 outlines, ensuring compliance with Chapter 146 of the Acts of 1885, but just as importantly it will examine whether the Acts have become a barrier to the Trustees and the City stewarding the community assets under their care, and will determine how the City Council can best support the

Trustees moving forward. A key expected committee deliverable will be a report by end-of-year 2025 with clear action steps on these points.

Soon, I will also make the appointments needed to fill the vacant Quadricentennial Planning Committee seats, including ex-officio appointments, so that this committee can begin its work, but I would like to make sure I can speak with the relevant parties in the coming weeks.

Finally, I would like to formally appoint **Councillor Carey McDonald as Council President Pro Tempore**, effective at the conclusion of this meeting, with appreciation to Councillor Spadafora for convening our docket tonight.

Code of Conduct & Group Norms

I would like to see Malden lead among City Councils statewide in setting group norms to govern civility in meetings. Norms are not a new idea; several Councillors have brought this up in the past, including most recently in a 2023 paper co-sponsored by Councillors Colón Hayes, McDonald, O'Malley and myself which was discussed on the floor and amended but ultimately withdrawn. Previous proposals by Councillors Spadafora and Murphy met a similar fate. Two years ago, when we last took this up, we were not in agreement as to whether the assistance of an external consultant was needed to navigate us through the exercise of developing a code of conduct; however, it is my belief that in light of recent meetings and the reality of our current fiscal climate, we need to act quickly to find a path forward on this issue, and we should tackle this in-house, collaboratively, together.

Accordingly, I will also appoint an ad-hoc committee to begin the process of drafting **group norms**, which I envision as simpler than a formal code of conduct and which should live as a chapter or appendix to our Rule Book as well as potentially be visible in our Council Chambers for us to reference during City Council meetings. Norms can include such behavior as being prepared for meetings; taking turns talking; setting social media boundaries; and whatever else the group deems helpful. Please keep an open mind to this process and the potential benefits it may bring us and future Councillors.

This will take place as part of the larger update to our **Rule Book** that I plan to undertake in a collaborative manner later this year.

Council Unity

Many of my colleagues have remarked to me that group cohesion would benefit from more opportunities to socialize or gather informally in ways that do not immediately involve Council Meetings or official business but rather involve getting to know one another as individuals. I agree, and I want to find a way to bring us together as a group. Please expect an invitation from me to an informal fall gathering in lieu of the traditional Council President's dinner so that we can find time to connect, and do think about ways we can weave team building more regularly into our year – without breaking the open meeting law, of course – and I will do the same.

Finally, I will close by letting you all know that Solicitor McNeil has filed an Affidavit to request the Superior Court to allow a Motion to Dismiss the lawsuit between the Trustees of the Malden Public Library and the President of the Malden City Council, which I hope marks the first positive step toward resolution of this matter. I will of course keep you all apprised of additional information as it becomes available.

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Linehan
President, Malden City Council