



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, March 10, 2026

5:30 PM

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

Watch the meeting with Teams: <https://tinyurl.com/33vn3yf6>

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

Prasanna Rajasekaran-Assistant City Solicitor

Maria Luise-Special Assistant to the Mayor

Ron Hogan-Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer

Charles Ranaghan-CFO/Controller

Dan Grover-Treasurer

Carol Ann Desiderio-City Clerk

Councillor McDonald called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

There will be audio and video of this meeting via Teams.

Minutes to be Approved

[140-26](#)

Minutes of February 3, 2026 to be approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Luong, seconded by Councillor Taylor, that the Committee Minutes of February 3, 2026 be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Business

[129-26](#)

Resolved: That it is the sense of the Malden City Council that during this time of budgetary constraints the Council is committed to the principles of fiscal responsibility and the efficient management of public funds that prioritize essential services and long-term financial stability.

The Council wishes to demonstrate a pledge of shared sacrifice and budgetary discipline and therefore requests the Honorable Mayor Gary Christenson cut

specific discretionary monies and reallocate for use in the general fund in the following ways which will result in savings up to \$95,000 for the upcoming fiscal year:

1. The elimination of the line items associated with Ward Improvement Funds;
2. The elimination of the line items associated with Fourth of July Funds;

Sponsors: Jadeane Sica and Peg Crowe

Attachments: [Paper 129-26 Public Comment](#)

[Ward 6 letter Public Comment on 129-26](#)

[Comment -- Paper 129-26](#)

[Final Paper 129-26\(b\) Resolve Budget Cuts Items 3 & 4](#)

Councillor McDonald explained we have one item of business on our agenda today and clarified we split this paper. The split part has not been edited the dollar amount is not edited we have not amended the original amount but we can do that this evening. There is not a presentation around this item just a math correction associated with the line items: Ward Improvement Funds=\$55,000 and the 4th of July Funds=\$40,000 for a total of \$95,000.

Councillor Linehan asked for clarification of the fund amounts

Councillor McDonald clarified that only ward Councillors receive 4th of July funds, not at-large Councillors, and that the board improvement funds are distributed at \$5,000 per Councillor.

Councillor Simonelli described how the proposed cuts would affect planned community projects such as the Rose Garden at Lincoln Commons, dedicated benches, and safety improvements like crosswalk signs. The potential cancellation of 4th of July events was highlighted as a significant concern, with councilors noting the tradition and community value of these celebrations.

Councillor Taylor wonders if we may be putting the cart before the horse. The vote is in two weeks and waiting to see the outcome of the upcoming special election before discussing what we might do. She said she knows how much she spends on 4th of July and residents in her Ward are willing to start fundraising to keep the celebration going. She said it is good to start talking about it but willing to wait to see what happens in a few weeks.

Councillor Luong discussed alternatives to outright elimination, such as consolidating events, reducing the number of celebrations, or increasing fundraising efforts. She feels there is some give and take maybe not stripping all the Ward accounts maybe if we take \$2,000 of each account but we have to start somewhere.

Councillor Sica emphasized that the resolution was intended to signal openness to cuts and encourage negotiation, not necessarily to eliminate events entirely. Her intention was not to send this paper to the Finance Committee but just send it up to the Mayor to review. She never intended to cancel the 4th of July celebrations.

Councillor McDonald said regardless of whether the intention was not to send this paper to committee it is in committee and we have the opportunity to clarify your points for the record.

Councillor Crowe said from her perspective a couple of weeks ago she said when the Mayor's budget comes down we have to negotiate if we didn't want something cut and can either reduce, refuse, reject or accept. Her thought was this is the first time this is happening in Malden so why not change the dynamic. Constituents are looking for where are the cuts. These are just areas where we could negotiate it is just a suggestion to the Mayor where we are open to cuts if necessary and are willing to negotiate.

Councillor Colon Hayes said she has spoken with constituents also and they are asking about cuts in the budget. It is hard to make cuts ahead of receiving the budget it is tough. We have not talked to Department Heads yet.

Councillor Winslow said he appreciates all the work everyone puts into the 4th of July and explained his volunteers are more budget conscious than he is for the 4th of July and they are doing a lot of buying things ahead of time. There are basic costs renting chairs, bouncy houses but his concern is some volunteers are scared away by fundraising and that is his concern. In Ward 6 his volunteers want to be independent of the Council he has worked with them but they want to be independent they put out the notices. He explained how improvement funds are used for essential neighborhood enhancements, such as safety signs and dog park amenities, and expressed concern that eliminating these funds would reduce the Council's ability to address local needs without relying on the Mayor's office. He feels we should wait to see what the vote is and we might have to be thinking on a whole different level. He is willing to follow the will of the voters.

Councillor O'Malley said this is a great conversation but changes in a future year might be on the table. The 4th of July celebrations take a lot of planning and feels doing it this fiscal year is a mistake. He doesn't feel is fair to take away these funds in the middle of it while we are planning it and doesn't feel it's fair to each neighborhood but in the future it could be feasible.

Councillor Condon there are a lot of cuts you can make you have to work twice as hard. If you buy the sausages, burgers and hot dogs but have volunteers cook it you can save money. It is important to have the celebration for the neighborhoods just scaling back would help. If the override doesn't pass you do what you have to do. That's the best you can do.

Councillor Luong explained that she spoke with residents this morning and they expect to see budget cuts and more streamlined operations at City Hall, being cost cutting regardless of the outcome of the override vote and she is hoping we are all thinking of that moving forward. Even if this passes it gets us out of this situation but she will never vote for another override we have to fix what we have coming forward and cut whatever we need to cut and raise money economically and move forward the best we can. We still need to streamline

Councillor Simonelli said to Councillor Luong we should wait till after the vote has been taken and then we can streamline not doing piece mail here and there.

Councillor McDonald said from the Chair their perspective on this is it is helpful to say to the public these funds are certainly ones we will have to cut if this doesn't pass and thinks that is squarely within our purview and want to be clear that we want to say we are open to cuts especially if this does not pass. With this specificity of this kind and it is transparent and useful and even if it does pass it is worth considering. We need to see what the community decides to do with these things. The Chair asked the committee if they would like to fix the dollar amount of this paper first.

Motion to amend Paper 129-26 to change line items which could result in savings

of up to \$95,000, reductions to line items associated with Ward Improvement Funds and reductions to line items associated with Fourth of July Funds was made by Councillor Sica seconded by Councillor Simonelli. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Councillor Sica, seconded by Councillor Luong, that the Resolution be recommended favorably to the City Council to read: Resolved: That it is the sense of the Malden City Council that during this time of budgetary constraints the Council is committed to the principles of fiscal responsibility and the efficient management of public funds that prioritize essential services and long-term financial stability. The Council wishes to demonstrate a pledge of shared sacrifice and budgetary discipline and therefore requests the Honorable Mayor Gary Christenson submit cuts to specific discretionary monies and reallocate for use in the general fund in the following ways which could result in savings of up to \$95,000 for the upcoming fiscal year: 1. reduction of line items associated with Ward Improvement Funds; 2. reduction of line items associate with Fourth of July Funds.

The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Other Business

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Luong, that this meeting be adjourned at 6:05 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

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