



# City of Malden

Malden City Hall  
215 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

## Meeting Minutes - Final Citizens Engagement Committee

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Tuesday, April 28, 2020

6:00 PM

Remote Meeting

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### Roll Call

**Present:** 3 - Deborah DeMaria, Neal Anderson and Amanda Linehan

Also Present: Councillors Camell, Condon, Crowe, Murphy, O'Malley, Sica, Spadafora and Winslow  
Ron Cochran-Communications Director  
Ken Rosetti-Assistant City Solicitor

In accordance with Governor Baker's 3/12/20 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c.30A,ss18, and the Governor's 3/23/20 Revised Guidance on Order by the Governor Prohibiting Assemblage of More than Ten People, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation.

In person attendance by members of the public is prohibited, and all effort will be made to permit public attendance of this meeting, in the manner specified below, via remote access by internet, telephone, and if available via public broadcast of the meeting by Malden Access Cable Television on public access television channels.

Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes, and/or a transcript, recording, or record of the meeting on the city of Malden website at [cityofmalden.org](http://cityofmalden.org) as soon as practicable after the meeting.

Additional information/guidelines for the public can be found here:  
<https://www.cityofmalden.org/DocumentCenter/View/2487/Public-information-on-Public-Meetings-and-Hearings-during-the-Declared-State-of-Emergency-related-to-COVID19PDF>

Members of the public who wish to attend remotely can do so using the following information:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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[pwd=ZTg5aHZEakRpMzVkCHlVZFBFZjVwdz09](https://zoom.us/j/93192277241?pwd=ZTg5aHZEakRpMzVkCHlVZFBFZjVwdz09)

## Minutes to be Approved

Minutes of February 4, 2020 to be approved.

**A motion was made by Councillor Amanda Linehan, seconded by Councillor Neal Anderson, that the minutes of February 4, 2020 be approved.. The motion carried unanimously.**

## Business

The committee will meet to discuss public engagement in the age of Covid-19 with Communications Director Ron Cochran as an invited guest.

*Councillor DeMaria called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. Councillor DeMaria explains that this is the first remote City Council sub-committee meeting. Ron Cochran is present to give information on how we as a community move forward with communicating with the city council procedures and technology information and the implications and zoom process that we need to continue to follow our open meeting laws and council rules. Ron gives a presentation on where we have come so far and how we move forward. (see attached) He speaks of what we have done so far with respect to meetings because what we have done with social media technology, information online getting information to our residents has been ongoing prior to*

Covid-19. The new challenge is assembling as meeting bodies with technology so he will focus on that. He begins with the timeline the Senior Center closed down on March 12th due to Governor's orders and we issued an advisory about attending public meetings. At this point we didn't know how we would move forward to conduct meetings. The closing forced the issue. Neighboring cities were facing the same challenges and Malden had to have an emergency meeting on March 28th of the school committee with a need for an executive session. We then researched which technology to use agreed on zoom. He has worked with the IT Department to comply with our needs to connect with people through this technology. There has also been training on the new technology but there can always be technical difficulties that will occur. April 6th was the first ever online meeting in Malden and the City Council had their first remote meeting on April 14th. There are other challenges to think about such as technical support zoom was quoting two weeks out for implementation and speed old rules subject to new formats. He has worked with the Solicitors office and Council President to decide what guidelines there are for public comment. This is the next level we are going for with these meetings. Councillor Anderson asks how can we stop interference with zoom meetings and Ron explains that is why he adopted the webinar style which regulates how members are invited to the meeting panelists or guests. Councillor Linehan asks what the cost difference is between the webinar version and do we get any advantageous pricing as a public entity and how is this hitting us financially. Also what are the next steps if we will proceed like this for a prolonged period of time for future meetings. Ron says the webinar is a little pricier however, the challenge with pricing is this is not on the state contract and the need was to start meeting and he put in a request regarding public contracts and received a response 2 1/2 weeks later asking for more information there is a long turnaround time. He also says for future meetings he suggest each body set up their meetings whatever way it works for them there are different functionalities such as Q&A which timestamps data. Councillor Condon asks moving forward what are the challenges as the Chair of meetings. Ron explains that he would be available for training on each individual meeting however, you don't always know what challenges you will face. He is working on guidelines with the Solicitor's office not only legal but also different questions pertaining to the individual meetings. Councillor Murphy asks what are his thoughts moving forward engaging the public and moving on with meetings in an effective manner and how do people get heard. Ron says when it comes to computers things can be done but the features are not always what people understand as far as technological abilities. As far as public comment technology will allow for it but the procedures have to be partnered to be effective going forward there are challenges but the system is capable of live commenting and receiving emails it is their choice. Councillor Winslow asks about the technical side what happens if there difficulties and what kind of rules do we have and who monitors the audio for example. Ron says again it is rules versus technology you try to approach all the errors as best you can and he hopes that the residents respect all the challenges we are facing but you can't account for these technological challenges computers are finicky and you can't rely on technology with how many devices we are using it may have to get down to rules. The monitoring has to be amongst the members in the group as it varies with different capabilities there has to be a lot of self-checks. Councillor O'Malley suggests a training for all committee chairs going forward. He also says he feels they should proceed with the most efficient and cost effective ways going forward with individual neighborhood and group meetings relating to individual accounts. Ron says that is what he is doing already training each Chair and would hold a group training if they would like and he is also trying to be a conservative with running the meetings now as it relates to zoom accounts due to the budget. We don't know how long this will last. Zoom is the source he chose right now and says that is what we should use now. Ken Rosetti suggests for the Council President to put a paper on the docket with guidelines for public comment to go before the Full Council. Councillor DeMaria asks the Council President to review the information to move forward. Council President Sica says she is working with the City

*Clerk and Ron reviewing the information from the Solicitor's office to work out the loopholes and plans to add it to the docket next week as a paper and suspend rules to pass it on the floor to not prolong the public comment proceedings we have to vote to agree to the terms. She feels the public definitely wants to be heard and they should stick to the time limit as it is. Councillor DeMaria says she is happy that the City Council has shown leadership in going forward with their meetings.*

[364-21](#)

Attachment for Citizens Engagement Committee Meeting  
4/28/2020

## **Other Business**

## **Adjournment**

**A motion was made by Councillor Neal Anderson, seconded by Councillor Amanda Linehan, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:58 P.M. The motion carried unanimously.**