



City of Malden

Malden City Hall
215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Meeting Minutes - Final Finance Committee

Chairperson Barbara Murphy
Vice Chair David Camell
Councillor Peg Crowe
Councillor Amanda Linehan
Councillor Deborah DeMaria
Councillor Jadeane Sica

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting

Roll Call

Present: 5 - Chairperson Barbara Murphy, Peg Crowe, Amanda Linehan, Deborah DeMaria and Jadeane Sica

Absent: 1 - Vice Chair David Camell

Also Present: Councillors Anderson, Condon, O'Malley, Spadafora and Winslow

Nate Cramer-City Assessor

Melissa Comita-Assessor's Office

Attorney John McNaught-Assistant Solicitor

24-21

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 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:

<https://cityofmalden.zoom.us/j/97789084196?pwd=Vlg3WIRleUIMZW4zRkE4Z1BHb0hxdz09&>

Passcode: 407815

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +16465189805,,97789084196#,,,,*407815#
+19294362866,,97789084196#,,,,*407815#

Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 646 518 9805

+1 929 436 2866

Webinar ID: 977 8908 4196

Passcode: 407815

International numbers available:

<https://cityofmalden.zoom.us/u/acg4rqk1jr>

If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact

Maria Luise, ADA Compliance Coordinator at
mluise@cityofmalden.org

<mailto:mluise@cityofmalden.org> or 781-397-7000, Ext 2005.

Minutes to be Approved

Minutes of January 12, 2021 meeting to be approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Linehan and seconded by Councillor Crowe to amend the minutes of January 12, 2021 by striking the word "Covid money" and replacing it with "election funds". Roll Call Vote: Crowe-yes DeMaria-yes Linehan-yes Sica-yes Murphy-yes Motion carries 5-yes 0-Nay

A motion was made by Councillor Crowe and seconded by Councillor Linehan to accept the minutes of January 12, 2021 as amended. Roll Call Vote: Crowe-yes DeMaria-yes Linehan-yes Sica-yes Murphy-yes. Motion carries 5-yes 0-Nay

Business

Nate Cramer, the City Assessor, will appear before the committee to provide an update on the Assessor's Department.

Councillor Murphy called the Finance Meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Jon Miara and MATV will be recording the meeting as well as the City. The committee has invited Nate Cramer, City Assessor to provide an update on the Assessor's Department. Nate Cramer stated he started in the assessor's office on August 31, 2020 and presently has a staff of 4 full-time employees, Melissa, Joanne, Diane and Elizabeth and 2 part-time employees Kathy and Bob. He saw a lot of redundancies occurring in the office with procedures such as residential exemption applications and deeds and has changed them to eliminate paper. The process for the residential exemptions was before the applications were

mailed out they would go through individually to see which properties were transferred to a trust to determine whether or not to be rolled over to the next year. Mr. Kramer said he wiped out anybody that added being changed that was getting the residential exemption they won't lose the exemption and be mailed applications, then ran a report which took about 20 minutes and created a mailing list of 545 properties approximately half of the 1,000 transactions that occurred which were properties that had residential exemptions and created a list then mailed them out. The department was able to get rid of index cards as the Registry of Deeds have the records online. He has worked with the IT Dept. to add dual monitors. He said he is working with Melissa on the abatements to eliminate paper and be more efficient with the process. He said they are accepting abatement applications presently till February 1, 2021 and said they have received 20 so far this year much lower than 185 last year. He is also training his whole staff the office functions and is trying to get more training for his staff by encouraging them to take online courses. Councillor Murphy asks him the structure of his office. Nate explains presently Diane Mackin is the Assistant Assessor and takes care of measuring and listing in the field and also helps with Deeds. Melissa handles residential exemptions, processes deeds, statutory exemptions and excise taxes. Joanne handles statutory exemptions, abatements and takes care of the mail. Elizabeth is a new hire which will learn from Diane, Melissa and Joanne all of the office functions. Bob Donnelly helps out with abatements and Kathy French helps when needed. Councillor DeMaria asked Nate if there is any thought of review of tax exemptions with questionable properties? Nate explained that he has requested a list from Steve Fama and they are working on that together with Dan Grover, Treasurer who gets returns from these questionable properties and has received about 30 so far. He also explains there is an overlay of time with the exemptions when selling a home of about 1 year based on occupancy as of January 1st. If the house is sold in May the owner gets the benefit of that sale. Councillor Linehan said she thinks it's great how he is recording and converting to digitization in the office. She also feels it is important to overlay jobs in the office and everyone should know other jobs. Councillor Anderson asked about the low number of abatements and if this includes veterans? Nate explains that the abatements are residents who feel their property is over priced whereas, veterans exemptions are statutory and the deadline for the veteran exemptions is April 1st. Councillor Anderson asks about his new hire. Nate explains Elizabeth has been educated in Senegal and the US and speaks four languages. She speaks Haitian fluently. This job was posted and they received 11 applicants and interviewed five candidates. Anthony Chiccarelli, HR Director was included in the interview process. Councillor Crowe thanks Nate and Melissa for all the work streamlining and asked about applications online. Nate said residential exemptions have picked up and it is hard during Covid with being in-house and remote this year. He has spoke to Ron Cochran about next year working on having the applications online. He also feels that if the applications are online it would also be helpful for residents especially with language barriers. Councillor Spadafora asks Nate if a resident can't pay their taxes on time due to Covid is he aware if there are any laws extending or waiving interest fees at the State level? Nate says not that he is aware of Dan Grover would have that information. Councillor Murphy thanks Nate for giving them the update and all the work he has done coming on in August during the pandemic. She likes the idea of a procedural manual for cross training his employees in the Assessor's office.

Other Business

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councillor Deborah DeMaria, seconded by Councillor Amanda Linehan, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:10 P.M. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yea: 5 - Murphy, Councillor Crowe, Councillor Linehan, Councillor DeMaria and Councillor Sica