

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Monday March 9, 2026  
Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street Malden, MA and  
Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read docket items for the meeting.

Mayor Christenson led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for those who have served our country and for those who continue to do so.

**Roll Call**

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson - Present

Mr. Drummey - Present

Mr. McCarthy - Absent

Ms. Spadafora - Present

Ms. Macklin - Present

Ms. Hortie - Present

Mr. Piazza - Present

Mr. Bernard - Absent

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Present

**Proposition 2.5 Resolution - Mr. Piazza and Mr. Bernard**

Mr. Piazza stated that there is a significant issue that will affect children enrolled in Malden Public Schools regardless of the outcome. He explained that he introduced the resolution to encourage public discussion and transparency on the matter. Mr. Piazza emphasized that the School Committee was elected by the public and therefore has a responsibility to provide accountability, transparency, and meaningful public debate, which he described as a fundamental element of democracy. He noted that school budgets are complex and involve multiple formulas and contingencies that attempt to assign financial values to difficult decisions. Mr. Piazza added that the complexity increases when considering how the school budget interacts with the broader city budget. As elected officials with a particular focus on educational matters, he stated that committee members have a role in helping the public better understand complicated issues.

Mr. Piazza explained that he partnered with Committee Member Bernard to draft the resolution endorsing the override. Mr. Piazza stated that he supports the measure because he believes additional funding would benefit children, whom he described as the School Committee's most important priority, referencing language from the committee's policy manual. He stated that

regardless of the outcome, the vote would provide transparency and inform the public about where committee members stand on the issue.

Mr. Piazza then made a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hortie for the purpose of discussion.

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg then spoke, stating that she had a question regarding the wording of the resolution. She suggested a possible amendment to the language specifically where it says that the committee declares. She suggests it be amended to say “supports”. Mr. Piazza accepts this change on the floor.

Ms. Spadafora stated that she wanted to clearly explain her position before the committee took a vote, noting that she believed she might be in the minority on the matter. Ms. Spadafora acknowledged that the City Council had voted to place a tax override before Malden voters, stating that doing so falls within the Council’s role and authority. She expressed support for allowing residents of Malden the opportunity to vote and decide what they believe is best for the community. However, she noted that the School Committee was being asked to formally endorse the override through the proposed resolution. Based on her experience, Ms. Spadafora stated that she was not comfortable supporting a formal endorsement. She referenced her seven years serving on the School Committee and stated that during that time committee members did not have access to the city’s financial warrants, which she indicated factored into her decision.

Ms. Spadafora continued by stating that she was not aware of any procedures prior to the passage of the Municipal Modernization Act that allowed a body such as the School Committee to designate members to approve financial warrants on its behalf. She referenced the Municipal Modernization Act, explaining that it allows governing bodies to appoint a chief administrative officer or designated member to approve warrants. She noted that in Malden this responsibility has been held by the Chair.

Ms. Spadafora stated that, until May of the previous year, the School Committee had not been provided copies of or access to the warrants. She explained that access was only provided after she began requesting them.

She also referenced existing School Committee policies that require committee approval for certain financial matters, including grant funding and transfers between salary accounts and operations and maintenance accounts. Ms. Spadafora stated that, in her experience, these items had not historically been brought before the committee for approval, which she said reflected a broader lack of transparency regarding the district’s finances. Ms. Spadafora further noted that the district recently returned approximately \$15,000 in grant funding because the funds were not spent. She added that, in her role as Finance Chair, she learned during a City Council Finance Committee meeting that the district had not met net school spending requirements the previous

year. She stated that this information had not been communicated to the School Committee by the district's finance manager or by the committee chair.

Ms. Spadafora concluded by stating that, while the discussion centered on transparency and finances, she believed the committee had lacked transparency in financial matters for more than eight years. She said she could not speak to the City's financial practices but noted that the committee had not received a clear explanation of how additional override funds would be allocated. Ms. Spadafora stated that she would be requesting that the School Committee take back direct approval authority over warrants until full transparency and stronger financial oversight are established.

The Chair clarified the amendment to the Resolution, "NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Committee ~~declares~~ supports a local revenue increase to benefit students and families in Malden Public Schools both in terms of the services they receive in district schools as well as the services they receive as residents of Malden". A roll call vote was taken as follows to adopt the Proposition 2.5 Resolution:

**Roll Call Vote**

Mr. Drummey - Yes

Mr. McCarthy - Absent

Ms. Spadafora - No

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Piazza - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Absent

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes

Mayor Christenson - Yes

The vote passed with a 6/1 vote.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Hortie made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. Ms. Macklin seconded and so it was VOTED. The motion passed unanimously.

I certify that a notice of this meeting was filed with the Clerk of the City of Malden in the manner provided under Chapter 39, Section 23A of the General Laws.

*Ariana Langston*

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**Ariana Langston, Clerk**