

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, June 22, 2020
Malden Senior Center, 7 Washington Street

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read the protocols in accordance with the format used for the meeting as follows: "In accordance Governor Baker's March 12th, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 18, and the Governor's March 23rd, 2020 revised guidance on order by the governor prohibiting assemblage of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. In-person attendance by members of the public is prohibited, but all effort will be made to permit public attendance of this meeting in the manner specified which is via remote access by the City's YouTube Channel and Malden Access Cable Television. Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes and/or transcript recording or record of the meeting on the City of Malden website at cityofmalden.org as soon as practicable after this meeting."

Roll Call

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson	Present
Mr. Drummey	Present
Mr. Froio	Present
Mr. Gray	Present
Mr. Iovino	Present
Ms. Luong	Present
Mr. McCarthy	Present
Ms. Spadafora	Present
Mr. Weldai	Present
Superintendent Oteri	Present
Clerk	Present

Budget Public Hearing

Mayor Christenson thanked the Budget Subcommittee Chair, Ms. Jennifer Spadafora, Budget Subcommittee members, Superintendent Oteri, Assistant Superintendents and Business Manager, Ms. Toni Mertz. Mayor Christenson added that the budget might change with whatever comes along in the future but these changes will always be made with the mindset of protecting the classroom. Mayor Christenson thanked the City's Communication Director, Mr. Ron Cochran for coordinating all the virtual public meetings. Mr. Cochran proceeded to go over guidelines for the public to provide their comments.

Public Comment

Ms. Bonnie Littlejohn, 127 Emerald Street, Malden

Ms. Littlejohn thanked Business Manager, Ms. Mertz and everyone involved with creating the budget and keeping the classroom intact with smaller class sizes. Ms. Littlejohn spoke about the elimination of

the 12 support staff positions throughout the five K-8 schools. Ms. Littlejohn said that she had one of these positions since it was created in January 2016. Ms. Littlejohn requested that these positions be reinstated should more funds become available before the start of the school year. Ms. Littlejohn said that these positions are beneficial for the children as it provides them with extra support. Mayor Christenson agreed and said that contingencies were made if the budget figures are not as bad as feared. Mayor Christenson asked all stakeholders to contact state and federal delegations to let them know the importance of funds for education.

Ms. Deborah Gesualdo, President of the Malden Education Association (MEA)

Ms. Gesualdo thanked everyone who worked on the budget. Ms. Gesualdo continued that any cuts to the budget will cause some kind of harm to our students' education and well-being. Because of the recent pandemic, students' needs will increase which will mean more teachers and staff will be needed. Ms. Gesualdo said that schools need to be fully funded and equipped. Ms. Gesualdo requested School Committee members, elected officials, community members and educators to stand together and collectively state that we will not allow the state to burden our district with more unfunded mandates; we will not allow the state and federal government to continue defunding public education; we will not allow the brunt of this crisis to be borne on the backs of students; and we will not allow students of color and immigrant families to be left behind.

Mr. Michael Berman, Malden High School (MHS) Science Teacher

Mr. Berman thanked everyone who worked on the budget. Mr. Berman urged the School Committee to reinstate the eliminated School Adjustment Counselor (SAC) position at MHS. Mr. Berman said that this position is very important to the students' social emotional well-being and academic learning.

Ms. Kayla Scheitlin, MHS Teacher

Ms. Scheitlin echoed Mr. Berman's concern about eliminating the SAC position at MHS. Ms. Scheitlin said that during the COVID-19 closure and the civic unrest in response to the racial injustice in the country, students have been under considerable social emotional distress. Ms. Scheitlin added that the SACs have been leading the staff community in hearing and supporting students. During this time of trauma and distress, Ms. Scheitlin said that the SACs are needed even more. Ms. Scheitlin continued that she truly appreciates Malden Public School's commitment to social emotional support for students and staff but feels that this decision does not align with the commitment or prioritizes the needs of the students and staff.

Mr. Chris Giordano, MHS Teacher

Mr. Giordano also echoed Mr. Berman's and Ms. Scheitlin's concerns. Mr. Giordano said that the work SACs do are so integral to daily lives of students, as they support the students to access the curriculum that teachers provide. Mr. Giordano said that the SAC position is essential to students' success. During the distance learning, Mr. Giordano said many students voiced their struggles and the difficult time they were having accessing curriculum as well as staying on top of their studies. There were so many needs that were not being met fully. Mr. Giordano fears that losing the support of the SAC will only exacerbate the challenges that students face. Mr. Giordano thanked the School Committee for trying to maintain positions at the schools during difficult times and hoped that more SAC positions can be added to support the students.

Ms. Elizabeth Gibbons, MHS Math Teacher

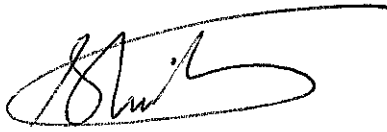
Ms. Gibbons echoed her co-workers' concerns and urged the School Committee not to eliminate the SAC position at MHS because it would be detrimental to students' well-being. Ms. Gibbons said that

students need support when they re-acclimate to the classroom as their lives, learning as well as social emotional health has been disrupted. Ms. Gibbons continued that the students' well-being is just as important if not more important than their academic success. Ms. Gibbons said that teachers realize how popular SACs are at MHS which has a large student body because they provide support for students to access the curriculum and be in classrooms. Ms. Gibbons added that students need adults that they can trust and approach.

Adjournment

Mr. Weldai made a motion to adjourn at 5:24 p.m. Mr. Iovino seconded and it was so VOTED. 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley Dorai", written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Dorai, Clerk