



Medford City Council  
Medford, Massachusetts

**Committee of the Whole, March 24, 2026**

**City Council**

Isaac B. “Zac” Bears  
Anna Callahan  
Emily Lazzaro  
Matt Leming  
Liz Mullane  
George A. Scarpelli  
Justin Tseng

This meeting will take place at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Medford City Hall, 85 George P. Hassett Drive, Medford, MA and via Zoom.

Zoom Link:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83990296381?pwd=gqaxqbZTOkHNR9L3OzlpLXXi53ZY72.](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83990296381?pwd=gqaxqbZTOkHNR9L3OzlpLXXi53ZY72.1)

1

Call-in Number: +19292056099,,83990296381#,,,,\*337849#

Live: Channel 22 (Comcast), Channel 43 (Verizon), [YouTube](#), and [medfordtv.org](http://medfordtv.org).

To submit written comments, please email [ccmembers@medford-ma.gov](mailto:ccmembers@medford-ma.gov).

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

**ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**26-061 - Offered by Isaac Bears, Council President**

Annual Budget Process for FY2027 - City Council Recommendations to Mayor

**26-053**

**Submitted by Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn**

Litigation Strategy - Chertok v. City of Medford - Request to Enter Executive Session per MGL Ch. 30A, Sec, 21(a)(3) [Votes May Be Taken]

## **Adjournment**



Medford City Council  
Medford, Massachusetts

**MEETING DATE**

March 24, 2026

**SPONSORED BY**

Isaac Bears, Council President

**AGENDA ITEM**

**26-061** - Annual Budget Process for FY2027 - City Council Recommendations to Mayor

**FULL TEXT AND DESCRIPTION**

Be it Resolved by the Medford City Council that, based on Budget Ordinance and discussions with the administration, the City Council and City Administration will follow the following budget schedule for the FY2026 City Budget:

- By March 11, 2026 - City Councilors Submit Individual Budget Recommendations for Consideration in Committee of the Whole
- Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 6PM - City Council Committee of the Whole Meeting to Discuss Council Budget Recommendations
- Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 7PM - City Council Regular Meeting to Submit Collective Budget Recommendation to the Mayor
- April 8, 2025 at 6PM - Joint Meeting of the City Council and School Committee to Receive a Financial Update and Discuss the FY27 Budget Process
- From April 15, 2026 to May 15, 2026 - City Council Holds Preliminary Budget Meetings with Department Heads
- By Friday, May 31, 2026 - Mayor Submits Comprehensive Budget Proposal to the City Council

Be it Further Resolved that the Draft Schedule of Preliminary Budget Meetings in Committee of the Whole is as follows:

- Wednesday, April 15th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Tuesday, April 21st, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Tuesday, April 28th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Wednesday, April 29th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Tuesday, May 5th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Wednesday, May 6th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.
- Tuesday, May 12th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.

- Wednesday, May 13th, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Councilor Mullane FY27 Budget Recommendations
2. Councilor Leming FY27 Budget Recommendations
3. Councilor Callahan FY27 Budget Recommendations
4. Councilor Tseng FY27 Budget Recommendations
5. Council Vice President Lazzaro FY27 Budget Recommendations

To: Clerk Richard Eliseo  
From: Councilor Liz Mullane  
Re: Preliminary Budget Requests for FY27

Dear Clerk Eliseo,

While there are many important services and needs throughout the city, I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions around specific areas for the FY27 budget for the City of Medford:

Ongoing investment in our city's infrastructure

- Continued funding to update, address, and rehab our roads and sidewalks with pothole repair, restriping of streets and other basic maintenance needs.
- Focus on pedestrian safety by improving signage, crosswalks and ongoing funding of a city-wide pedestrian safety audit to identify additional dangerous walking areas throughout Medford
- Provide additional funding for DPW projects that improve the city, and to specifically assist in addressing snow removal and plowing needs
- Encourage additional funding and more staff support around city-wide reporting technology for residents when they identify and report issues throughout Medford

Expanding and increasing city services

- Additional funding for the Library to provide more librarian staff support, and to have a designated Community Outreach position to oversee, manage and grow community engagement, immigrant services, adaptive learning and youth outreach.
- Continued investment in mental health services throughout the city, by providing additional trained staff and clinicians to help de-escalate situations, and to focus on offering support and help to those experiencing mental health or substance abuse crises
- Providing support to our seniors by assisting in additional outreach efforts and more social worker access for the community
- Support of Medford's art and culture organizations, by providing funding around programming, spaces, and performance opportunities at many of our venues located throughout the city.
- Continued investment in affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Trust and programs that encourage housing solutions in Medford
- Ongoing support of conservation efforts, through partnerships with local groups and working to help identify and protect more open, green spaces throughout the city.

Support of our children and families

- Meet the School Committee needs for Medford Public Schools
- Address any funding gaps for organizations that provide support, community resources, and key services for young children in Medford.



---

## Budget asks

---

**From** Matt Leming <mleming@medford-ma.gov>

**Date** Wed 3/11/2026 11:58 AM

**To** Isaac 'Zac' Bears <ibears@medford-ma.gov>; Emily Lazzaro <elazzaro@medford-ma.gov>

**Cc** Richard Eliseo <reliseo@medford-ma.gov>

I have four budget asks for this upcoming season:

- **Funding for a dive team for the Medford Fire Department.** Funding for a dive team is a priority for Local 1032. Dive team training and equipment is standard in most surrounding municipalities, and right now any emergencies in Medford's lakes and rivers requires help from neighboring municipalities.
- **Funding for an additional traffic/transportation planner for The Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability.** This would help with many of our conversations about parking in the rezoning process and enable us to craft a beneficial policy. It would help the Bicycle Commission with implementation of the Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, as well as the crafting of a Transportation Demand Management program.
- **Consolidation of engineering positions.** Many essential positions in our Engineering Department that have either seen excessive turnover or have simply been unfilled in recent years. I request that the pay for these positions be increased, and that we potentially reduce the number of positions to fewer, higher-paying positions, in order to attract and retain candidates.
- **Additional positions in the Clerk's Office.** The Clerk's office is understaffed at the moment, and City Council is in need of both people who can assist with our backlog of ordinances and agendas, while still going about the day-to-day duties of the office.

Thank you,

Councilor Leming



Outlook

---

## FY27 Budget Priorities

---

From Anna Callahan <acallahan@medford-ma.gov>

Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:28 PM

To Isaac 'Zac' Bears <ibears@medford-ma.gov>; Richard Eliseo <reliseo@medford-ma.gov>

### Anna Callahan Budget Priorities

March 11, 2026

Dear President Bears,

I am submitting my FY27 budget priorities ahead of the Committee of the Whole discussion of City Council budget recommendations.

Affordable housing continues to be a number one concern for residents. The housing crisis affecting the entire region is hitting Medford particularly hard, with both rents and home prices rising faster than many residents' incomes. At the same time, climate change is increasing the risks of extreme heat, flooding, and other environmental pressures in our city. These challenges require us to think creatively about how we use the resources we already have and how we mobilize the strengths of our community.

With that in mind, my top FY27 budget priorities focus on initiatives that can deliver meaningful results quickly, at relatively modest cost, while strengthening community engagement and quality of life in Medford.

#### **1. Allocate staff time to advance a Home Sharing program**

Home Sharing has been shown in other communities to provide hundreds of units of affordable housing, keep seniors in their homes and aging in place longer, and increase a sense of community, all without any infrastructure changes.

Because home sharing relies on existing housing rather than new construction, it represents one of the least expensive and fastest tools available for us to reach our housing and affordability goals in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

A group of Medford residents has spent the past year and a half researching how a program like this could work in our city and meeting with organizations that operate similar programs elsewhere. The next phase requires active participation from the City.

In FY27, I am requesting that the Administration allocate staff time—potentially through the Housing

Planner or another appropriate role—to begin advancing this work. This could include evaluating potential program models, exploring partnerships with nonprofit or private program operators, coordinating with nearby municipalities that may wish to collaborate, and identifying the resources that would be required to implement a program in Medford.

## **2. Fund implementation of the Urban Tree Management Plan**

Medford's tree canopy is an essential part of the city's infrastructure. Trees reduce heat, absorb stormwater, improve air quality, and support public health. They also help make neighborhoods more walkable and livable.

I commend the administration for completing a comprehensive tree inventory and developing an Urban Tree Management Plan that outlines how the City can protect and restore this critical resource.

In FY27, the City should allocate the resources necessary to begin fully implementing this plan. This includes funding regular pruning and maintenance cycles, watering newly planted and vulnerable trees during dry periods, maintaining and updating the tree inventory, expanding annual planting levels, and investing in the data and monitoring tools needed to track canopy change over time.

## **3. Support volunteer tree planting**

Medford currently loses more trees each year than it plants, and some blocks no longer have a single street tree remaining.

Volunteer planting offers the City an opportunity to expand tree planting capacity at a fraction of the usual cost, since the largest expense of planting trees is typically labor. More than 70 Medford residents have already volunteered to donate their labor to this effort.

To make volunteer planting possible, the City should allocate funding in FY27 for the costs that must be covered by the City in order for these events to occur. This includes purchasing the trees and covering any requirements the City determines are necessary for volunteer planting, such as professional supervision, liability coverage, or staff coordination.

By funding these limited costs, the City will save money by unlocking many thousands of dollars' worth of donated labor from residents and significantly increase the number of trees planted each year.

—

Together, these initiatives represent practical steps Medford can take to address housing affordability, climate resilience, and neighborhood quality of life. Each builds on existing community interest and work already underway, and each would help the City make meaningful progress on issues that residents consistently identify as priorities. Additionally, the home sharing and volunteer tree planting efforts are both among the most cost-effective & budget-friendly ways the city can reach its housing and climate goals.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration as we continue the FY27 budget process.

Respectfully,

Anna Callahan  
Medford City Councilor



**JUSTIN TSENG**  
City Councilor

# City of Medford

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

City Hall  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

**Residence**  
36 Wellington Rd.  
Medford, MA 02155

**Contact**  
781-866-2572  
jtseng@medford-ma.gov

To: City Clerk Richard Eliseo  
From: Councilor Justin Tseng  
Re: **Preliminary Budget Requests for FY2027**

---

Dear Clerk Eliseo,

I am writing to submit my preliminary budget priorities for FY2027.

Cities like Medford find themselves in a challenging period. Rising costs, tariffs, uncertainty in federal funding, and decades of systemic underinvestment continue to put pressure on municipal budgets. These forces are largely outside our control, but their effects are felt directly by our residents and our city government.

At the same time, Medford has made meaningful progress. Last term, residents voted to make historic investments in our public schools and in our streets and sidewalks. Those investments are already helping stabilize critical school programs and allowing the City to begin addressing long-standing infrastructure needs. *We must maintain this progress by supporting the School Committee and Department of Public Work's full budgetary requests.* We must now also look ahead to reimagining key community hubs like pursuing badly needed repairs to our High School.

The work ahead is to build on our progress while preparing for the challenges that may come. Budgets are statements of our values and aspirations. Those remain clear: ensuring Medford is a city where people can build their lives, shape their neighborhoods, and know that their government works for them.

With that in mind, I respectfully offer the following priorities for consideration as the Council deliberates and Administration prepares the FY2027 budget proposal.

**I. Strengthening City Capacity, Financial Sustainability, and Affordability**  
**A. Establish a Grant Writer / Grants Manager Position**

As municipal budgets tighten, it is increasingly important that Medford maximize outside funding opportunities. A dedicated grant writer could help departments pursue state, federal, and philanthropic funding while managing compliance and reporting requirements. Even one successful grant could offset the cost of the position while bringing in additional resources.

Looking ahead, the City should also explore investments in operational capacity, such as data and performance analysis to track service delivery, digital service improvements like better online permitting and service request tracking, and project management capacity to help departments move major capital projects forward efficiently and to operate a volunteer hub for residents who wish to contribute to our community.

## **B. Provide Assessing Department Staffing to Implement a Residential Exemption**

The Council has long indicated interest in pursuing a Residential Exemption to help stabilize housing costs for Medford residents. The Assessing Department has indicated that implementing this program would require one to two additional full-time staff members to process applications, with an estimated impact of \$100,000–\$200,000. Ensuring the department has this capacity will allow the City to deliver on a commitment aimed at helping residents remain in the community they call home.

*At the same time, the City should continue funding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and efforts to increase housing supply, including the citywide zoning project.*

## **II. Investing in Safe and Reliable Infrastructure**

### **A. Increase Funding for DPW, Engineering, and Facilities**

As Medford addresses years of infrastructure backlog, we must ensure departments have the resources to keep our streets safe and well maintained.

Priority investments include:

- Implementing recommendations from the Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission, including hiring a traffic engineer focused on walking, biking, and transit to advance Vision Zero and Complete Streets initiatives.
- Increasing DPW staffing to address restriping, signal timing improvements, pothole repair, and maintenance backlog.
- Providing adequate funding for road safety markings, signage, and related equipment.

These investments will help ensure that recent infrastructure funding translates into safer streets and more reliable public works.

### **B. Improve Snow and Sidewalk Plowing Capacity**

Reliable winter operations are essential for public safety and accessibility. The City should consider investments in equipment that would allow DPW to improve street and sidewalk plowing operations so residents, schools, and businesses can move safely during winter storms.

### **C. Support Tree Planting and Canopy Expansion**

Tree canopy is critical for neighborhood livability, climate resilience, and public health. As the City receives its Urban Forest Management Plan, we should begin planning for expanded tree planting and stewardship, including funding for a half-time volunteer coordinator to support community volunteer tree planting initiatives.

## **III. Strengthening Public Safety**

### **A. Fund Fire Department Dive Team Training and Equipment**

Given Medford's extensive waterways that we are so fortunate to enjoy, establishing a dive team within the Fire Department would strengthen emergency response capabilities and

ensure first responders have the training and equipment necessary to respond to water-related emergencies. Previous estimates put this at \$122,933.

*At the same time, several of the City's fire stations continue to require repairs and long-term capital improvements, which should remain a priority.*

#### **IV. Expanding Access and Inclusion in City Services**

##### **A. Stabilize Funding for the Medford Family Network**

The Medford Family Network (MFN) provides important resources and programming for families with young children. In light of the loss of external funding streams, we should support the MFN in their efforts to maintain the staffing and programming capacity that many families rely on and which help families save on household expenses.

##### **B. Fund Recreation and Inclusion Staff Positions**

Through ongoing conversations with residents with disabilities and their families, several gaps in city services have been identified. Funding a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, a Recreation Department Office Manager, and a Citywide Inclusion Specialist, at an estimated cost of approximately \$200,000, would expand access to city programming and ensure residents of all abilities can participate fully in community life.

##### **C. Maintain Funding for the Community Liaison Program**

The Community Liaison Program has strengthened connections between City Hall and Medford's diverse communities. Maintaining funding for these positions will help ensure residents continue to have a voice in local government and help the City protect our residents from federal encroachment on their rights. The City's partnership with the Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition to expand outreach to Medford's AAPI community is a promising step forward for the program.

*The success of the Community Liaison Program provides a strong jumping off point that could create more community events for the City to help in navigating complicated applications for social services and public benefits, like financial aid and energy efficiency programs, which can help residents who are traditionally overlooked to cut costs. Further funding could expand this to the broader public.*

#### **V. Supporting Civic Life and Community Identity**

##### **A. Create a Dedicated Local Arts Investment Line Item (\$80,000)**

Medford's arts and cultural organizations help shape the identity and vibrancy of our city. In the most recent grant cycle, more than 60 percent of requests—representing roughly \$125,000 in proposed programming—went unfunded. A modest municipal investment could support performances, public art, festivals, and other community programming that bring residents together and activate public spaces.

##### **B. Re-establish a Cultural Affairs Staff Position**

To support this work, the City should consider re-establishing a Cultural Affairs staff position with a modest operating budget to coordinate arts programming, streamline permitting, and support events such as Medford Open Studios, public art installations, and performances at venues including the Condon Shell, Chevalier Theatre, and Arts Collaborative Medford. Investing in arts means investing in community.

### **C. Pilot a Neighborhood Placemaking Fund**

Finally, I recommend piloting a small neighborhood placemaking fund in the range of \$25,000–\$50,000. Small grants for murals, community gardens, neighborhood events, benches, and other improvements can have an outsized impact in helping residents shape the places in which they live.

## **VI. Protecting Quality of Life**

The City should continue supporting programs that directly affect residents' quality of life, including rodent prevention and sanitation efforts. Maintaining reliable waste services—including weekly waste pickup—remains important for protecting neighborhood health and livability.

## **VII. Looking Ahead**

This list of priorities is admittedly extensive, and surely underinclusive. The challenges facing our city, however, are significant, and the opportunities to strengthen our community are real. Many of these investments are modest in cost but meaningful in impact, helping protect the progress we have made while positioning Medford for the years ahead.

As in previous years, I encourage the Council to create and distribute a public input survey so residents can share their priorities directly with the Council and Administration.

Medford has always been shaped by the people who live here—their ideas, their creativity, and their commitment to their community. Our role as a local government is to create the conditions that allow residents to shape the future of the city they call home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Justin Tseng, Medford City Councilor

To: Acting Clerk Rich Eliseo  
From: City Council Vice President Emily Lazzaro  
Re: Budget Requests Fiscal Year 2027

Dear Acting Clerk Eliseo,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the City's annual budget by proposing some items that I believe will increase safety and quality of life in Medford for its residents. These priorities are critical at a time when our community sees constant increases in violence and fascism at the national level and craves the security of a City that listens and protects its residents.

Medford has made concrete changes to its driving infrastructure to address last year's increase in pedestrian deaths from traffic crashes. I would like to see the position of traffic engineer filled this fiscal year, and to do so, I would like that position to be reposted with a higher salary range.

My second budget priority is to fund the Medford Public Schools to the fullest degree as requested and approved by the Medford School Committee.

My third budget priority is to increase the pay for part-time librarians at the Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library. These positions are part-time but require the employees to have Masters degrees in library science and they should be compensated at a higher rate. I request that we meet the request of the library department and pay these employees what they deserve.

Thank you to the Council and the Administration for considering these priorities in the FY2027 budget.

Sincerely,

Emily Lazzaro  
Vice President  
Medford City Council



Medford City Council  
Medford, Massachusetts

**MEETING DATE**

March 24, 2026

**SPONSORED BY**

**AGENDA ITEM**

**26-053** - Litigation Strategy - Chertok v. City of Medford - Request to Enter Executive Session per MGL Ch. 30A, Sec, 21(a)(3) [Votes May Be Taken]

**FULL TEXT AND DESCRIPTION**

Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) (Purpose 3): discuss strategy with respect to litigation where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the City - Chertok v. City of Medford et al., U.S. District Ct. 1:26-cv-10589 (2026).

**RECOMMENDATION**

**FISCAL IMPACT**

**ATTACHMENTS**

None