



City of Melrose

Appropriations & Oversight Committee

Monday, April 6, 2026, 7:00 PM
City Council Chamber, 1st Floor
562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

AGENDA

NOTE:

To watch this meeting live visit mmtv3.org or local cable station MMTV (Channels 3, 15, 22 on Comcast or Channels 37, 38, 39 on Verizon)

Some Board and Commission meetings meet via zoom. Information on how to enable closed captioning for online commission meetings can be found by clicking [here](#).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Kimberly Vandiver	Vice Chair
Jason Chen	
Cal Finocchiaro	
Maya Jamaledine	
Manjula Karamcheti	
Elizabeth Kowal	
John Obremski	
Christopher Park	
Ryan Williams	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio
Devin Romanul	Chair

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Appropriations & Oversight Committee Meeting March 2, 2026 7:20 PM

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

When: Apr 6, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Appropriations & Oversight Meeting

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:
<https://cityofmelrose-org.zoom.us/j/96234665160?pwd=c7qqlaDjP5Dw7gvpWlvPUA5l8mGO9H.1>
Passcode: 508869
Webinar ID: 962 3466 5160

IV. APPROPRIATIONS

- A. **(ID # 2026-612):** An Appropriation from Free Cash (account 01-324001) in the amount of \$20,020 to the Elections Department (#162) for upgrades to Poll Pads and Printer.
- B. **(ID # 2026-614):** An Appropriation from Free Cash (account 01-324001) in the amount of \$50,000 to the Melrose Cultural Council (#2543) for the purposes of grant funding for arts and cultural events and programs in Melrose.
- C. **(ID # 2026-615):** An Appropriation from Free Cash (account 01-324001) in the amount of \$25,000 to the Mayor's Office (#121) to support Chamber and City events.

V. ORDERS

- A. **(ID # 2026-616):** An order to define the Veteran Volunteer Tax Work Off Program established by the Melrose Board of Alderman in 2012, including a description of the program, eligibility requirements and necessary application documents.
- B. **(ID # 2026-618):** Acceptance of donations totaling \$500,000 from the Friends of the Melrose Public Library and the Trustees of the Melrose Public Library.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Melrose does not discriminate based on disability and is committed to hosting accessible meetings and events. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Melrose or to attend meetings, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Polina Latta platta@cityofmelrose.org.



CITY OF MELROSE

City Clerk's Department

Tanji Cifuni
City Clerk
tcifuni@cityofmelrose.org

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
Telephone: 781-979-4113

March 5, 2026

Our Vendor, LHS, that we partner with to help run our elections, has notified us that our Poll Pads, 6th Generation iPads, will need an upgrade.

LHS recommended the Poll Pads listed below will need to be upgraded by the end of 2026.

The estimated upgrade cost is \$750.00 per device, which includes:

- A new iPad and charger
- A protective iPad sled
- A protective travel case (required due to the larger iPad size)

This cost does not include a new printer. If we would like to plan to upgrade our printers at the same time, the additional cost would be \$450.00 per paper receipt printer, our swork just fine.

Upgrades become necessary when an iPad's operating system and the Poll Pad application are no longer compatible, or when the application can no longer be supported on that model. Based on current projections, this will occur by December 2026.

All our existing equipment is currently in good working order and LHS will take it back for us. This notice is simply to inform you of the projected end-of-shelf-life for the specific equipment listed below and the need to order upgraded equipment for the state elections beginning in August of 2026.

POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 001	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 002	17.7.5	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 003	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 004	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 005	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 006	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 007	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 008	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 009	17.7.1	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)

POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 010	17.7.5	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 011	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 012	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 013	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)
POLLPAD CITY OF MELROSE MA 014	17.7.4	3.6.0	iPad (6th Gen.)

MC-3 Printers we currently use for 001 through 028 are perfectly fine and do not need to be upgraded at this time.

One of the three label printers we use for early voting stopped working last Fall. The replacement cost is \$550.00 each and we will need one for early voting this August.

I am attaching a copy of the quote from LHS to replace all 28 poll pads and replace the broken printer.

Our request is for a total of \$20,020 to upgrade the hardware, software and the printer.

There is a 6-week lead time to get them here and then they need to be programmed with the new software.

It is our hope to have the new poll pads ready to go for the state primaries that begin in August.

Sincerely,



Tanji Cifuni
City Clerk's Office



Company Address 8A Industrial Way
Unit 100
Salem, NH 03079
US

Created Date 2/12/2026
Expiration Date 5/13/2026
Quote Number 00002906

Contact Information

Prepared By Brenda L'Italien
Title Director of Poll Pad Sales and Support
Phone (978) 651-2511
Email bcm@lhsassociates.com

Customer Name Melrose
Contact Name Tanji Cifuni
Title City Clerk
Email tcifuni@cityofmelrose.org

Address Information

Bill To Name Melrose
Bill To 562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176

Product Code	Product	Product Description	Sales Price	Quantity	Total Price
PP-01	I360 Sled	I360 Sled	\$50.00	28.00	\$1,400.00
PP-12	Poll Pad Application & Software Installation Fee	Poll Pad Application & Software Installation Fee	\$100.00	28.00	\$2,800.00
PP-07	Poll Pad Carry Case (920 Receipt)	Poll Pad Carry Case (920 Receipt)	\$200.00	28.00	\$5,600.00
PP-08	Poll Pad Tablet (Wi-Fi)	Upgrade or Replacement (Wi-Fi)	\$340.00	28.00	\$9,520.00
E99-99	Shipping/Handling/Delivery Charge	Shipping and Handling	\$150.00	1.00	\$150.00

Subtotal \$19,470.00

Total Price \$19,470.00

\$ + \$ 550.00 - new label printer
\$ 20,020

Upgrade 001-028

All prices quoted are subject to change without prior notice. Pricing may be adjusted to reflect changes in market conditions, vendor costs, or other factors beyond our control.

Signature

By signing below, you are acknowledging that the above pricing is accurate and within budget, and that you are ready to move forward with the official purchase and contract initiation:

Customer Signature: _____

Printed Name & Title: _____

Date: _____

Anticipated First Use Date: _____



Company Address 8A Industrial Way
Unit 100
Salem, NH 03079
US

Created Date 2/12/2026
Expiration Date 5/13/2026
Quote Number 00002906

Contact Information

Prepared By Brenda L'Italien
Title Director of Poll Pad Sales and Support
Phone (978) 651-2511
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Customer Name Melrose
Contact Name Tanji Cifuni
Title City Clerk
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Customer Signature: _____

Printed Name & Title: _____

Date: _____

Anticipated First Use Date: _____



City Auditor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4107

Free Cash Orders for Fiscal Year 2026

“Free cash” is a term used to describe any remaining, unrestricted funds from the previous fiscal years. After it is “certified” by the state, free cash use requires a recommendation from the Mayor and an appropriation from the City Council.

For more information on free cash, you can review this [fact sheet](#) published by the Department of Revenue – Division of Local Services.

Council Order ID #	Appropriation Request	Department	Description	Appropriation Approved	Balance of Free Cash
-	-	-	-	-	\$ 5,558,450
2026-612	\$20,020.00	Clerk/Elections	Poll Pad Laptops & Printers		\$ 5,538,430.00
2026-614	\$50,000.00	Mayor	Cultural Council Funding		\$ 5,488,430.00
2026-615	\$25,000.00	Mayor	Chamber & City Events Support		\$ 5,463,430.00

*The first three appropriation requests listed will appear on the 3/16/26 City Council Agenda. As requests are submitted by the administration and approved by the City Council, the table above will be updated accordingly and shared with subsequent orders.



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JENNIFER GRIGORAITIS

Mayor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4440

To: Melrose City Council
From: Mayor Jen Grigoraitis
Re: Requesting Free Cash Appropriation for the Melrose Cultural Council
CC: Kerri Golden, CFO; Lauren Grymek, Chief of Staff
Date: March 9, 2026

I respectfully request the City Council approve an appropriation of free cash in the amount of \$50,000 to the Melrose Cultural Council (MCC) for the purposes of grant funding for arts and cultural events and programs in Melrose. The MCC is a local cultural council under the state's program. This will supplement the annual Local Cultural Council Allocation grant of \$16,800 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, accepted by the City Council earlier this calendar year.

The need for arts and culture funding in Melrose is growing. Last year, the MCC received 44 applications requesting \$80,650 in funding; they were able to approve 31 applications for a total of \$39,546 (5 partially funded, 26 fully funded). This funding was derived from three sources: \$20,000 from City of Melrose (free cash appropriation); \$16,800 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (annual allocation from the state); and \$2,746 from MCC fundraising efforts.

Data from the MCC's July-August 2025 Community Survey, completed by 240 people, informed them that the community is looking to engage in free outdoor events, public art, and events that encourage community building, social connections and dialogue. Additionally, the MCC's survey found that 70% of those surveyed that attended an arts or cultural event in Melrose also ate in a local restaurant either before or after the performance, while over 50% visited a local merchant and over 40% stopped to have a drink. The City is grateful for the MCC's work in providing programming that also helps our local economy grow.

The City's investment in the Melrose Cultural Council ensures that these public funds can be granted equitably, transparently and consistently to great local grant applicants. Ultimately, this allocation of \$50,000 enables the MCC to provide more grants at a higher amount for local arts and culture initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

History of Funding the Arts in Melrose:

This appropriation follows the prior two fiscal years' free cash requests of \$20,000 each.

In June 2024 my administration requested, and the City Council unanimously approved, a \$20,000 appropriation in free cash funds to support the Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts (MMFA), a City of Melrose-funded account administered by mayoral appointees, for Fiscal Year 2025. Later that summer, the volunteer administrators of the MMFA unanimously approved a plan to integrate MMFA funds and operations into the larger Melrose Cultural Council (MCC).

The integration of the Messina Fund into the Melrose Cultural Council reduced administrative burdens on local grant recipients by creating the opportunity for applicants to seek funding from one source. Further, the merger improved and streamlined the MCC's and MMFA's common mission of grantmaking for community arts and culture endeavors in the City of Melrose. The City's allocation for arts and cultural programming now falls solely under the Melrose Cultural Council



City Auditor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
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Free Cash Orders for Fiscal Year 2026

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March 30, 2026

Mayor Jen Grigoraitis and Melrose City Council
562 Main Street
City Clerks Office
Melrose, MA 02176

Dear Mayor Grigoraitis and Members of the Melrose City Council,

On behalf of the Lincoln School PTO, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the approval of an increased municipal allocation to the Melrose Cultural Council in fiscal year 2026. The Melrose Cultural Council grant program has been an important resource for the funding of community cultural events such as the Lincoln School's annual World Culture Night.

World Culture Night seeks to build community by increasing awareness around diversity and encouraging social connections by offering an opportunity to engage with and learn more about our neighbors. Funding from the MCC has supported this event and most notably, has allowed the Lincoln PTO to include paid performances, making World Culture Night both educational and entertaining. For the last 3 years, the Nüwa Athletic Club has headlined the event with an all-female lion dance performance. We have also been able to expand accessibility of the performance by using grant funding to offer in-school daytime assemblies to reach all students.

Increasing the funding for the Melrose Cultural Council's grant program has the potential to further promote cultural diversity, inclusion and racial equity and encourage a vibrant cultural life in Melrose, by allowing for the growth and development of more events like World Culture Night. The City Council's financial support of the MCC would increase the opportunities for cultural events in Melrose by providing a greater number of grants as well as a higher level of commitment to grantees. At a time when more of us find reasons to sit behind a screen within the walls of our home, it is so important to have events that encourage community connection and an appreciation for our city.

I am proud to support the Melrose Cultural Council and their efforts to make our community a better place. I hope you will support the approval of additional funding in FY26 to continue to grow the community and culture in Melrose.

Sincerely,
Chrissy Horan
Lincoln PTO

From: [Mayor Grigoraitis](#)
To: [Grymek, Lauren](#)
Subject: Fwd: Thank You for Support of the MCC
Date: Monday, March 23, 2026 9:10:04 AM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Myron Dittmer <mdittmer@mthoodpa.com>
Date: March 23, 2026 at 8:32:23 AM EDT
To: Mayor Grigoraitis <jgrigoraitis@cityofmelrose.org>
Cc: Melrose Cultural Council <melrosecultural@gmail.com>
Subject: Thank You for Support of the MCC

Dear Mayor Grigoraitis:

It was great to see you at last Wednesday's Melrose Cultural Council grant reception. Also, it was enjoyable for me to meet other grant recipients and to learn how much the Council's financial support made a difference in putting on their event or project.

As president of the Mt. Hood Park Association, I can tell you personally how important their financial support means to us in supporting our annual July 4th community concert each year. This is one of the reasons why I am so proud to be a resident of this great and outstanding city which supports so many of our creative arts and musical performances. And of course, you have already shown your deep commitment to the arts in the short time you have been Mayor.

It is heartening to hear, during your speech at Wednesday's event, that you commit to obtaining more financial support for the MCC from the City Council for the coming year. Please know that you have my complete support in these efforts!

Warmly,

Myron

--

Myron F. Dittmer, Jr.
President
Mt. Hood Park Association
Tele: (781)665-8172
Email: Mdittmer@mthoodpa.com
Website: www.mthoodpa.com
Facebook: facebook.com/mounthoodpark

****CITY OF MELROSE PUBLIC RECORDS NOTICE: Please be advised that the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email is a public record

unless the content of the email falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Laws.****

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Molly Goyette, Program Director
Family Resource Network-CFCE/PC+ Grants
60 Farm Street, Wakefield, MA 01880

March 24, 2026

Melrose City Council
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176

Subject: Support for Increased Funding for the Melrose Cultural Council

Dear Council Members,

As the Program Director of a local family education and support program and an advocate for arts and culture, I respectfully request your consideration for increased funding for the Melrose Cultural Council in the forthcoming budget.

The Local Cultural Council (LCC) plays a vital role in Melrose, fostering creativity and economic growth through the grants they provide to artists, schools, and local organizations. However, in recent years, the demand for these funds has far outpaced the available resources. Increasing this funding is a direct investment in local arts, quality of life and economic vitality.

Over the past fifteen years, the Family Resource Network has relied on grants from the Melrose Cultural Council to deliver free cultural programming to families with young children. These initiatives would not be feasible without their financial support. Due to persistent level funding, supplemental support from the Cultural Council remains essential to ensure accessibility to educational and creative arts programs for local families.

Investing in the cultural sector brings high returns: it offers high quality arts programming, supports small businesses, and provides educational opportunities for children. Strengthening the Melrose Cultural Council's capacity will ensure that Melrose remains a vibrant, attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to supporting cultural arts in Melrose.

Sincerely,

Molly Goyette, Program Director
Family Resource Network

From: frani02l76@aol.com <frani02l76@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 2:50 PM

To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofmelrose.org>

Subject: Melrose Cultural Council Funding

DELVENA THEATRE COMPANY

254 Ocean Avenue, No. 2

Lynn, Ma 01902

(781) 595-5504

March 31, 2026

Melrose City Council

562 Main Street

Melrose, MA 02176

Dear Members of the Melrose City Council,

I am writing in strong support of the request to increase municipal funding for the Melrose Cultural Council.

Delvena Theatre Company has had the privilege of presenting numerous performances at the Melrose Senior Center, including our Meet Julia Child, Truly Eleanor Roosevelt, All the President's Ladies, Isabella and The Incredible Mae West shows, as well as several interactive murder mystery events. Through these experiences, we have seen firsthand the profound impact that Cultural Council funding has on the lives of Melrose residents—particularly seniors. The audiences we serve are not only engaged during the performances, but deeply invested afterward.

Our post-show conversations are lively, thoughtful, and often quite moving. Many attendees share personal stories, historical insights, and reflections sparked by the performances. Over time, these individuals have become more than audience members—they have become a community we genuinely cherish. They have become our friends.

We have also observed the broader community benefit. Following performances, it is common for audience members to gather at local restaurants to continue discussions. Our casts have joyfully continued discussions with audiences at Turners, Mexico Lindo and other Melrose restaurants. These Delvena Theatre show events do not end when the curtain falls; they extend into the local economy, supporting Melrose businesses and fostering social connection.

Increased funding for the Melrose Cultural Council would allow for more opportunities like these—programming that engages, educates, and connects residents across generations. It ensures that seniors, in particular, continue to have access to enriching cultural experiences that bring joy, stimulation, and community into their lives.

We are proud to be among the many artists supported by this funding and would be honored to see a diverse group of grant recipients continue to bring meaningful programming to the city.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing support of the arts in Melrose.

Sincerely,

Fran Baron

Delvena Theatre Company



To: Melrose City Council

From: Lisa Simmons, Program Manager, Mass Cultural Council

Re: The Melrose Cultural Council requesting Free Cash Appropriation

CC: Kerri Golden, CFO; Lauren Grymek, Chief of Staff

Date: April 1, 2026

Dear Chair Brad Freeman and distinguished members of the Melrose City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today in strong support of an appropriation of free cash in the amount of \$50,000 to the Melrose Cultural Council for the purposes of grant funding for arts and cultural events and programs in Melrose. This funding will supplement the annual Local Cultural Council (LCC) Allocation of \$16,800 from Mass Cultural Council.

My name is Lisa Simmons, and I am a Program Manager at Mass Cultural Council for the Communities Initiative Team, which includes the LCC Program. At Mass Cultural Council, we have seen firsthand the impact that local investments in arts and culture can have on individual artists, youth, elders, small nonprofits, and the contribution that impact has on the vitality of our neighborhoods.

For 45 years, the LCC Program, administered by Mass Cultural Council, has been recognized as the largest grassroots cultural funding network. LCCs serve as the essential bridge between cultural activity in a community and the residents who benefit from it. Their strength lies in their deep knowledge of local artists, their understanding of community cultural traditions, their awareness of neighborhood needs, and their connection to the cultural identities that define each city and town in Massachusetts. The funding that LCCs distribute fuels local creativity and cultural vibrancy, supports a broader range of artists, sustains smaller cultural initiatives, and enables community-driven projects rooted in heritage, creativity, and innovation.

Arts and culture are not optional. They are economic drivers, community stabilizers, and essential contributors to civic health and overall wellbeing. LCC-funded projects create jobs, activate public spaces, preserve cultural heritage, and strengthen community identity. In FY25, 63 municipalities provided additional funds to their LCCs totaling 1.29M. By supporting this appropriation, you are helping build a more vibrant creative ecosystem in

the City of Melrose. I respectfully urge the City Council to advance this measure to equip the Melrose Cultural Council with the resources it needs to fully serve its community.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to the cultural life of our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Lisa Simmons

Lisa Simmons
Program Manager
Communities Initiative
Mass Cultural Council
10 St. James Avenue, 3rd floor
Boston, MA. 02116

From: Oren Santillo <oren.b.santillo@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2026 8:40 PM

To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofmelrose.org>

Subject: Letter of Support for MCC Funding Increase

Dear City Councilors,

My name is Oren Santillo, and as you consider approving an increase in funding for the Melrose Cultural Council, I want to share with you my experience as an MCC grantee. I have organized Melrose Jazz Fest since 2024, resurrecting a citywide event that had gone dormant about 10 years prior. I believe this event has been so important for the cultural development of Melrose and last year, the community proved this impact by bringing over 300 people together for the 5 hour festival, giving the event so many glowing reviews highlighting the cultural impact of the festival, especially that it had met a popular public demand: large scale free music events!

Importantly, this event would not be at all possible without the MCC funding that I received. There is little chance I could have gotten similar funds using sponsors, smaller granting organizations, or public donations. This exclusive possibility is especially true for the level of funding I received - I was granted over \$3,000 for both the 2025 and 2026 festivals. Just as important is the fact that this amount of funding would absolutely not have been possible without the contribution from the City of Melrose which allowed the MCC to make more impactful contributions, particularly to larger-scale projects like Melrose Jazz Fest. Furthermore, the small grants, sponsors, and public donations I did receive in addition to the MCC grant were a lot easier to get with the valuable support of the MCC behind us. An MCC endorsement is a magnet for other sponsors, grants, and donations, making it even more important, far beyond the monetary face value. I am very hopeful that this increase is approved, so that many more of these large and small projects can reap the benefits that Melrose Jazz Fest has enjoyed, adding immensely to the cultural propulsion of melrose.

As well as being an MCC grantee and a senior at Melrose High School, I also serve as a student member on the MCC - a unique and valuable position the Melrose Cultural Council

provides. The Melrose Council was one of the first in the state to offer this position to high school students, and remains a council with one of the most robust and developed programs of its kind. In this role, I have been able to make a substantial impact in my community by helping so many people and organizations with projects beyond just funding, by offering support and advice throughout the process using my experience as a grantee, organizer, and a student! This experience has also taught me so much about the granting process, but especially the incredible importance of public funds being used for artistic and cultural programs and events. Private organizations and large and small donations alike are also important of course, but it is so different and way more impactful for a government organization to pledge their support of art and culture, in the form of consistent financial backing, making their commitment clear to their constituents.

Thank you so much for your service on the Melrose City Council!

Sincerely,

Oren

From: Stacey Babb <stacey@openingdoorsproject.org>

Sent: Monday, April 6, 2026 3:38 PM

To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofmelrose.org>

Subject: for tonight: Statement in support of funding for the Melrose Cultural Council

Dear City Councilors,

I understand you will be considering a funding appropriation for the Mass Cultural Council during tonight's City Council meeting and I would like to submit my statement of support for consideration (below).

Many thanks,

Stacey

The Melrose Cultural Council actively brings our city closer to its ideal of "One community open to all" by supporting diverse artists and making the arts accessible through reducing cost barriers. The Opening Doors Project greatly values the work of the Melrose Cultural Council and we have seen firsthand how funding for the arts goes further than just the artist. In addition to fostering economic activity and helping make Melrose a vibrant city, arts funding also builds community at a time when coming together is especially meaningful.

- Stacey Babb, Co-Founder of The Opening Doors Project

Stacey Babb

Producer & Co-Founder

617-459-6568c

The Opening Doors Project

Amplifying voices of color and advancing interracial conversations about race.

On behalf of Kris Rodolico, Founder and Director of Follow Your Art Community Studios:

Follow Your Art has been fortunate to receive a grant annually from the local cultural council to support various free and low-cost creative community events like Chalk Walk, storytelling collaborations with Stellar Story Corp, and a workshop series in collaboration with the Melrose Farmers Market for 2026. In each instance, our goal is to use public funds to find new ways to provide accessible creative experiences that are open to everyone.

Allocating an additional \$50,000 to the local cultural council is game-changing for arts and culture in Melrose. Resources that support local creatives are very limited, and grant writing is hard work. Independent creatives often do that work not knowing if it will lead to funding for their talent and effort, and with limited resources deserving projects are left unfunded. Additional funds open up more avenues for local artists and event producers to not only provide the community with cultural experiences, but also to be paid for their work, which in turn feeds the local economy.

FYA is committed to being a resource for creatives in Melrose, providing space use, collaboration for community events, and mentoring for young creatives who are just launching their projects, some of whom hope to submit their own grants this year. Additional grant awards benefit the city as a whole and we are excited about the opportunities that would come to the arts and culture sector of the community as a result.



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JENNIFER GRIGORAITIS

Mayor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4440

To: Melrose City Council
From: Mayor Jen Grigoraitis
Re: Requesting Free Cash Appropriation for City Support of Chamber of Commerce Events
CC: Kerri Golden, CFO; Lauren Grymek, Chief of Staff
Date: March 11, 2026

For nearly forty years, the City of Melrose has supported the Melrose Chamber of Commerce community events – Summer Stroll, Victorian Fair and Home for the Holidays – by providing staff overtime from the Department of Public Works, Police Department and Fire Department. These staff costs were historically covered using funding in the department’s annual operating budget (overtime line items). In Fiscal Year 2026, due to city budget constraints and reductions to departments’ overtime, my administration committed a one-time allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cover the costs of staffing these three community events.

My administration is committed to supporting the Melrose Chamber of Commerce during the City’s Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027) and in a way that does not keep the financial burden of doing so in the annual operating budget. To that end, I respectfully request the City Council’s approval of a free cash appropriation of \$25,000 to cover City staff overtime that ensures these events, which are beloved community traditions which support our local business and arts and culture sectors, can take place.

The Melrose Chamber of Commerce will continue to plan and execute these three community events during Fiscal Year 2027. The City of Melrose will be named as an event partner in event related marketing, publicity and communications and provide staffing as deemed necessary by the City through its Department of Public Works, the Melrose Police Department and the Melrose Fire Department.

Thank you for your consideration.



City Auditor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4107

Free Cash Orders for Fiscal Year 2026

“Free cash” is a term used to describe any remaining, unrestricted funds from the previous fiscal years. After it is “certified” by the state, free cash use requires a recommendation from the Mayor and an appropriation from the City Council.

For more information on free cash, you can review this [fact sheet](#) published by the Department of Revenue – Division of Local Services.

Council Order ID #	Appropriation Request	Department	Description	Appropriation Approved	Balance of Free Cash
-	-	-	-	-	\$ 5,558,450
2026-612	\$20,020.00	Clerk/Elections	Poll Pad Laptops & Printers		\$ 5,538,430.00
2026-614	\$50,000.00	Mayor	Cultural Council Funding		\$ 5,488,430.00
2026-615	\$25,000.00	Mayor	Chamber & City Events Support		\$ 5,463,430.00

*The first three appropriation requests listed will appear on the 3/16/26 City Council Agenda. As requests are submitted by the administration and approved by the City Council, the table above will be updated accordingly and shared with subsequent orders.



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

Melrose City Hall
562 Main Street

Melrose, Massachusetts 02176

To: City Council
CC: Mayor Jen Grigoraitis; Lauren Grymek, Chief of Staff
From: Veterans Services Department
Date: March 10, 2026
Re: Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program

On November 1, 2012, the Melrose Board of Alderman passed Order 2013-54 to accept MGL Chapter 59, Section 5N¹, which allows municipalities to establish a Veterans Volunteer Work Tax Abatement Program that provides a veteran with a reduction of property tax obligation in exchange for volunteer services. (See attached order printout.)

Following acceptance of the statute, Order 2013-177 went before the Board of Alderman for consideration, to define the program with a description of the program, application time frames, eligibility requirements and necessary application documents. At the time, Order 2013-177 was placed on file, it was not passed by a vote of the then Board of Alderman. (See attached order printout.)

My administration is proposing that a defined program be approved by the City Council, and codified in City ordinance as the senior citizen property tax work-off abatement program is in Section 6.1 of the City code, to ensure continuity of the program as well as set parameters for the future operations of the program.

The attached application materials define the program and eligibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIX/Chapter59/Section5n>



CITY OF MELROSE

In City Council

November 1, 2012

AN ORDER

ORDER-2013-54

Acceptance of MGL Chapter 59, Section 5N, as amended by Chapter 108, Section 8A of the Acts of 2012 allowing for the establishment of a Veterans Volunteer Work Tax Abatement Program; and further accept the provisions in the last paragraph of Statute.

BE IT ORDERED

See attached communication from Alderman Wright.

HISTORY:

10/15/12	City Council	ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE
10/18/12	Appropriations and Oversight	OUGHT TO PASS

RESULT: PASSED [10 TO 0]

MOVER: Francis X. Wright Jr., Ward 3 Alderman

SECONDER: Robert A. Boisselle, Ward 4 Alderman

AYES: Bird, Boisselle, Conn Jr., Forbes Jr, McAteer-Margolis, Medeiros, Mortimer, Seaboyer, Wright Jr., Tramontozzi

ABSENT: Gail Infurna



CITY OF MELROSE

In City Council

June 3, 2013

AN ORDER

ORDER-2013-177

Presentation of the Veterans Volunteer Tax Work Off Program

BE IT ORDERED

The purpose of this procedure is to define the Veteran Volunteer Tax Work Off Program (VVTWOP) established by the Melrose Board of Alderman in 2012. Included in this procedure is a description of the program, application time frames, eligibility requirements and necessary application documents. All questions should be directed to Melrose Veteran Services.

HISTORY:

05/20/13 City Council

ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE

05/23/13 Appropriations and Oversight

RECOMMEND PLACE ON FILE

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Mary Beth McAteer-Margolis, Alderman at Large

SECONDER: Robert A. Boisselle, Ward 4 Alderman

AYES: Bird, Boisselle, Conn Jr., Infurna, McAteer-Margolis, Medeiros, Mortimer, Seaboyer, Tramontozzi, Wright Jr., Forbes Jr

Melrose Veterans Department
Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program
Application Materials



Thank you for your interest in the City of Melrose Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program. Please review the attached documents and complete all required paperwork. All questions should be directed to the Melrose Director of Veteran Services.

Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program

City of Melrose
Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program

The City of Melrose Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program (VPTWOP) is managed by the Veterans Department. VPTWOP is subject to federal income tax reporting as well as Medicare tax per the Internal Revenue Service but is exempt from Massachusetts State income tax. The City of Melrose will pay the full amount of the Medicare tax so that the total amount of credit the participants receive will remain the same.

To comply with IRS regulations, the City is required to issue a W-2 at the end of the year. As a participant in the VPTWOP program the IRS considers you an employee of the city and thereby requires your participation in the OBRA retirement plan. The OBRA retirement plan will retain 7.5% of your gross property tax credit, to be disbursed to you later.

As an employee of the City of Melrose, applicants are expected to comply with all city policies including the Standards of Conduct, the Employee Manual, and supervisor instructions. Participants in this program may not have any other paid position with the City of Melrose.

Description

Eligible veterans who provide volunteer services for the City of Melrose are entitled to up to **\$1500** off their property tax bill in any given tax year in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 59, Sec.5N. Veterans who are placed in the program shall receive the credit as abatement against their real property taxes. The program is administered by the City of Melrose Veterans Department and veterans will be placed in assignments based on department need, preference and matched skills.

Timeframe and Process

Applications for the VPTWOP are available from the City of Melrose Veterans Department beginning **May 1, 2026**. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

- Applications can be found on the Veterans Department Webpage or at the Veterans Departments office (562 Main Street)
- Applications pulled from this lottery are not automatically granted placement in the program as placements are also determined based on an applicant's ability to meet a department's needs
- City departments have final approval of all placements.
- If an applicant declines an offered placement, the application will be moved to the bottom of a waitlist, if needed.

Eligibility

Melrose residents who meet the definition of a veteran as defined by M.G.L. Chapter 178 Section 48 and 56 as amended by the Acts of 2024 are eligible for the program. Proof of veteran status must be included in the application (DD214, Honorable Discharge). **Please Note: All participants must pass a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check.**

Requirements

- **Must be homeowner or current spouse**
- **Must own and occupy the property for which abatement is being sought**
- **Only one abatement per household**

Qualification Process

- **Applicants are required to reapply each year**
- **Applicants are required to enroll in OBRA retirement plan**
- **Applicants are required to possess the appropriate skills required for the available position**
- **Applicants and Department Head need to both agree that it is an appropriate match**
- **Applicants are responsible for turning in their completed and approved time sheet by the specified deadline.**

Types of Jobs

Assignments may vary and can include both administrative and community-based responsibilities. Some positions require computer skills for typing and data entry; applicants are encouraged to list any software programs with which they are proficient in the application. Strong interpersonal and customer service skills are also essential, as volunteers may interact with the public both in person and by phone.

Other assignments may involve more physical or outdoor tasks, as well as basic administrative duties such as filing or shredding documents. Some positions may require lifting items weighing up to 30 pounds.

Positions vary year to year based on departmental needs. Placements are determined by matching an applicant's skills and prior experience with the current needs of the department.

Application Documents and Forms

Applicants are required to turn in the following documents: Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- 1) Veteran Status Proof (DD214 or Federal Document)
 - a. Honorable Discharge
- 2.) City of Melrose Application
- 3.) City of Melrose CORI Acknowledgement Form
- 4.) Driver's License or Government Issued Photo ID
- 5.) Completed W-4
- 6.) Resume (optional)
- 7.) Proof of Ownership of Home
- 8.) Proof of Residency in Home in Which Abatement is Requested

Name: _____

Tel. No: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____

City of Melrose
Veterans Property Tax Work-Off Program

Please describe any past job experience or skills that may be helpful in securing a position:

Do you have any physical or mental restrictions that should be considered in selecting your work? If yes, please explain:

If I qualify for the VPTWOP – Veteran, I acknowledge by signing below that I have read, understand, and agree to follow all program guidelines. I confirm that I have submitted all required documentation and understand that I may earn up to \$1,500, which will be credited to my property tax bill.

Signature _____ Date _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Disposition of Application New Applicant _____ Repeat Applicant _____

CORI Submitted on: _____ CORI Approved on: _____

Placement location _____

Placement letter, time sheet and dress/fragrance policy provided on: _____

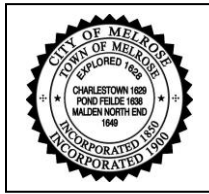
Is applicant a previous employee of the City of Melrose? _____

Bencor Form Requested on: _____ Bencor Form Received back: _____

Bencor form faxed to Bencor on: _____

APPLICATION RECEIVED: DATE _____ TIME _____

Please be sure to provide your email address, as all program correspondence will be sent to applicants via email.



City of Melrose Veteran Property Tax Work Program

Job Description

Department: Veterans Services

Supervisor: Tamara Shovelton

Classification: Volunteer/VPTWOP

Purpose: To fill a department's needs with a qualified applicant who is available to work an assigned volunteer shift

Responsibilities:

Listed below are various areas of support within the Veterans Department that may be encompassed by a Veteran Property Tax Work-Off individual.

Veterans Food Pantry Support

- Assist with lifting, carrying, organizing, and distributing food items
- Assist with pantry setup and breakdown
- Deliver groceries or food packages to veterans who are unable to leave their homes, using a personal vehicle only, when assigned and approved
- Interact with veterans and family members in a respectful and professional manner

Memorial Day Activities

- Assist with flag placement at veterans' graves, including walking on uneven terrain and inserting flags into the ground
- Assist with event preparation, including envelope stuffing, material organization, and program preparation
- Assist with stage setup, seating arrangements, food service areas, and logistical support
- Assist with Memorial Day food drives, including receiving, organizing, and distributing donated items

Veterans Day Activities

- Assist with event preparation, ceremonies, food drives, and logistical support
- Assist with setup and breakdown of event materials and equipment

Food Drives and Outreach Events

- Stand for extended periods to receive donated items
- Assist with sorting, organizing, and transporting donations
- Provide logistical and general support during public-facing events

Thanksgiving and Holiday Support

- Assist with preparation of meals for veterans attending in person
- Assist with preparation of to-go meals for distribution
- Deliver meals to veterans when assigned and approved

Office and Administrative Support

- Assist with filing, organizing, and shredding documents
- Support outreach initiatives and event preparation
- Handle records and materials that may contain confidential or sensitive information

All assignments are subject to supervision. The City retains sole discretion to assign, modify, or discontinue duties based on operational needs, safety considerations, or participant performance.

Qualifications:

- Must be an eligible veteran or dependent approved for participation in the Property Tax Work-Off Program
- Ability to follow instructions and comply with supervisory direction
- Demonstrated reliability, punctuality, and appropriate conduct
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively as required
- Ability to interact professionally with City staff, volunteers, and the public
- Ability to interact professionally and respectfully with members of the public, including veterans, family members, City staff, and volunteers
- Ability to perform basic computer-related tasks when assigned, such as data entry, filing, scanning, or use of standard office equipment

Dress Code:

- Participants must dress appropriately for assigned duties
- For outdoor or physical assignments:
 - Weather-appropriate clothing
 - Closed-toe shoes or work boots required
- For office or administrative assignments:
 - Clean, neat, and appropriate casual or business-casual attire
- Required safety equipment must be worn when directed
- Attire must be suitable for public-facing and ceremonial events

Additional Requirements:

- Participants must comply with all applicable City policies, procedures, and safety protocols
- Participants must maintain confidentiality when handling sensitive or personal information
- Assignments may require evenings, weekends, or holidays
- Participation may be limited, suspended, or terminated due to safety concerns, conduct issues, or failure to meet program requirements
- Hours worked will be credited toward property tax relief in accordance with program guidelines

Veterans property tax work-off abatement program.

A.

Individuals who meet the definition of a veteran as defined by M.G.L. Chapter 178 Section 48 and 56 as amended by the Acts of 2024 are eligible for the program. Proof of veteran status must be included in the application (DD214, Honorable Discharge). Individuals must be the homeowner and must own and occupy the residence for which property taxes are paid and for which credit is being sought. Only one tax abatement per property per year shall be allowed.

B.

City departments are required to identify their specific needs, and the Veterans Department will review each application to match an applicant's interest and skill set with a department's specific needs. Placement in the program cannot be guaranteed and is based on qualifications and availability of relevant work.

C.

The participants in the program shall perform volunteer work for the City and shall receive a rate that shall not exceed the commonwealth's minimum wage for said service. The maximum abatement which can be earned by any participant in the program is \$1,500 during any calendar year.

D.

Records of hours worked are kept and credited at the Massachusetts minimum wage rate. Upon completion of work by the participants, the Board of Assessors shall apply the credit to the owner's tax bill to abate their property taxes for an amount no greater than \$1,500.

E.

In each calendar year, individuals shall be allowed to participate in this program based on one's specific qualifications to perform the work and the available positions needed to perform said work Citywide. An approved representative shall be allowed to perform the volunteer work for the direct benefit of any participant who is physically unable to personally provide such services to the City of Melrose.

F.

In the event there are more qualified applicants than available positions, participants for the program may be selected from a lottery of equally qualified individuals.

G.

The Veterans Services Agent shall be responsible for determining eligibility for the program.



MELROSE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Date:
To: City Council
Cc: Mayor Grigoraitis
From: Kerriann Golden, CFO
Linda C.W. Gardener, Library Director
Subject: Building Project Donated Funds

The Friends of Melrose Public Library, with the help of a significant matching donation, successfully ran a fundraising campaign during the library renovation. The results of that campaign and match have allowed the Friends to donate \$300,000 to the City to mitigate the cost of the library construction/renovation project.

The Library Board of Trustees, in addition to the \$2,000,000 dedicated to the library building project previously, donated an additional \$200,000 to further assist with the cost of the project.