



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
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JENNIFER GRIGORAITIS

Mayor

Dear Melrose Community,

On May 6, 2024, I asked the Melrose City Council to hold a special election on June 18, 2024 for a \$7.7 million operational override. On May 13, the City Council unanimously voted to hold an election for an operational override, which will include funding for both City and School Departments, starting July 1, 2024.

Here's why:

The City's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 25) budget will continue to serve Melrose residents and students. It will continue to provide the vital services required and expected by the community. **But** it will also mean that the City and Schools need to implement major cuts to important priorities, including staff layoffs, salary freezes, and little or no investment in important areas such as capital repair projects and sustainability measures. If an override is **not** approved, this is the budget that the City and the Schools will adopt for FY 25.

As Mayor, my financial team and I believe that an operational override is the most prudent and responsible course of action for our community. We have scrubbed every cost center, reviewed every account, and budgeted as conservatively as we can. There is no magic bullet for continuing to deliver the same level of services to residents with an annual increase of 2.5% when so many of our mandatory costs are going up at far faster rates.

If an override question is approved by the voters of Melrose, the additional revenue will be used to fund:

\$3.5 million to the City for Public Safety salary and wages for our first responders (both police and fire), salary and wages for currently unfunded or underfunded positions, including Economic Development, Sustainability, Council on Aging, Recreation, Library, Public Health, and Public Safety; mandatory benefits for new city and school positions; compensation adjustments, and vital investments in budget lines for public safety and DPW overtime, capital maintenance, for municipal buildings, information technology needs, and sustainability measures.

\$4.2 million to the Melrose Public Schools for teaching and learning personnel, services, and materials to support all students and meet growing enrollment and increased student needs, as outlined by Interim Superintendent John Macero and the Melrose School Committee during the School budget process (<https://www.melroseschools.com/page/budget-information-and-documents>).

The Special Election is now set for **June 18, 2024**, and in the weeks ahead, my team and I in City Hall will provide Melrose voters with as much information as we can at: <https://www.cityofmelrose.org/fy25budget>. As a voter, you have a choice to make, and we hope that the information we furnish will equip you with the facts you need to decide.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jen Grigoraitis