



# CITY OF MELROSE

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROBERT J. DOLAN  
*Mayor*

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June 24, 2009

Michael Sack  
CEO, Hallmark Health  
Melrose-Wakefield Hospital  
585 Lebanon St.  
Melrose, MA 02176

Dear Mr. Sack,

In a spirit of compromise and partnership, I would like to offer you the following proposal. As you are aware, in recent years, Melrose-Wakefield Hospital provided a gift in lieu of tax to the City of Melrose in the amount of \$45,000 per year to provide assistance in meeting the demands of municipal services that the hospital requires.

For many years before that, the gift was as high as \$150,000 per year. In recognition of the economic struggles of running a hospital in good and bad times, and the importance of the hospital as a partner, I have never asked for additional dollars—despite the fact that demands on the city by the hospital have increased significantly in recent years.

In your recent letter, you have proposed nothing. That is unacceptable and is considered irresponsible by me, the Melrose Board of Aldermen, our state delegation, and the citizens of Melrose. In a spirit of partnership, I offer the following: The Melrose-Wakefield Hospital shall consider a formal gift in lieu of tax of \$25,000 per year. This yearly payment shall be made at any time during the municipal fiscal year, which ends on July 1. Hopefully, this will provide you greater flexibility.

Although in the past you have asked that this money not be earmarked, I will make a commitment to you that we will spend \$15,000 to fund the yearly activities of the Healthy Alternatives for Youth program run by the city's Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. The City of Melrose, in partnership with the hospital, will be able to fund all staffing for the program. This will allow that staff to have available resources and to implement programs that educate parents and students and improve the public health of all. I have enclosed a plan of action and a proposal as to how those funds may be spent within the program.

We will also commit to using the additional \$10,000 to further partner with the North Suburban Family Network. As we are both aware, the state has significantly reduced funding to the NSFN. This commitment of dollars from the city of Melrose will alleviate some of the effects of these reductions. We feel that this is an important program that

benefits the children and parents of the city of Melrose, and I applaud the work of Kathy Harlow and Barbara Musselman and their staff.

I believe this is a fair and reasonable compromise for the following reasons:

This proposal calls for an almost 50 percent reduction in what the City of Melrose considers the hospital's responsibility to this community. In light of the increase in service demands by the hospital, this is a significant concession by the city and its citizens, who bear the brunt of those services.

This proposal dedicates funding for programs that are at the core of the mission of the Melrose Wakefield Hospital.

This proposal offers flexibility in terms of timing of payments and provides a formal structure in which all parties know their responsibilities.

This proposal frees up funding that will assist the city of Melrose to meet the ever expanding public safety needs of the hospital.

All municipalities and hospitals are dealing with historically difficult times, but the fact remains that hospitals across the commonwealth, including locally the Winchester Hospital, recognize the level of municipal services required to run a safe and efficient operation. They recognize the need for a partnership with a community in order to be successful. The city also acknowledges the importance of the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, and all our dealings have respected that relationship.

I ask that you consider this proposal and respond as soon as possible.

It is our intention that this commitment begin in fiscal year 2010, which begins on July 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Dolan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "D".

Robert J. Dolan  
Mayor

CC:

Sen. Richard Tisei  
Sen. Thomas McGee  
Rep. Katherine Clark  
Melrose Board of Aldermen  
Melrose School Committee