

The median Fed member now sees the Fed Funds Rate at 4.625% by the end of 2024 as opposed to the 5.125% conveyed in September's dot plot. This was clearly better news than the market was expecting because here's what rates did when it came out:



2yr Treasury yields have more in common with near-term Fed Funds Rate expectations while 10yr yields move more like mortgage rates. Speaking of mortgage rates, they had quite a week, although you'd only know it by looking at actual daily averages such as the Mortgage News Daily index as opposed to weekly surveys that don't yet reflect the huge drop in the 2nd half of the week.

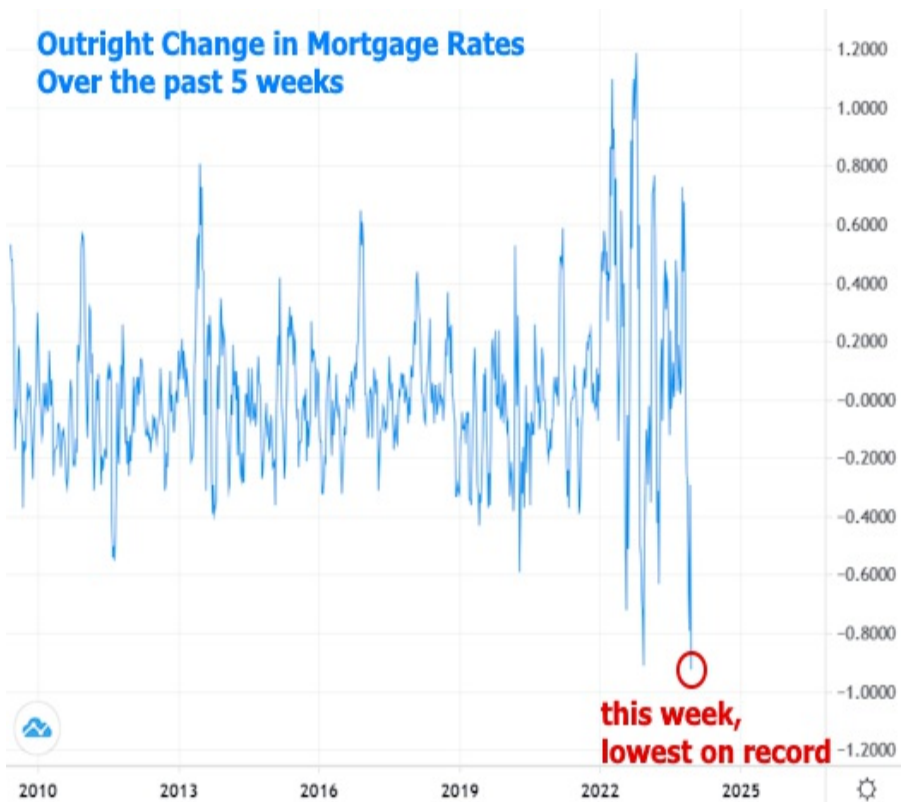
30 Year Fixed Mortgage Rates

— Mortgage News Daily (6.64)
— Freddie Mac (6.95)
— MBA (7.07)



While Freddie Mac's rate index fell by bigger amounts in the 1980s on a few occasions, this is the biggest 5 week drop on record for the MND index. The following chart shows the 5-week change in rates. In other words, the drop that began in November is the biggest we've seen in decades, even if only slightly bigger than the drop seen last year.

Outright Change in Mortgage Rates Over the past 5 weeks



In addition to the dot plot, Fed Chair Powell mentioned that the Fed had begun to discuss rate cuts. It's important to keep in mind that Powell has also been clear that the Fed could actually hike rates again if inflation were to pick back up. He's also been clear in saying that inflation would need to keep moving lower in order to make rate cuts a reality. As far as this week's Consumer Price Index (CPI) data was concerned, we're on the path, but still far from the destination.



We won't get CPI again until the new year. Moreover, we won't get much by way of other relevant economic data before then either. Combine that with the typical decline in trader participation in late December and it's not unfair to say the jury is pretty much out for the next few weeks. Rates may ebb and flow a bit, but the important decisions are on hold until big-ticket data and more robust participation return after the holiday break.