



Town of Orleans
Finance Committee
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24 JAN 19 10:50AM
ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 4, 2024 – 7:00pm

This was a hybrid meeting of the Orleans Finance Committee convened in the Nauset Room at Town Hall, with remote participation provided by Zoom technology. Real-time public access was provided by Orleans Channel 8 on the Town website and cable television.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Finance Committee Vice Chairman Chris Kanaga. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum, were Committee members Lynn Bruneau and Elaine Baird (in the Nauset Room) and Nick Athanassiou, Tony Pearl, Ed Mahoney, Peter O'Meara, Constance Kremer and David Abel participating remotely.

Guests: Select Board Liaison Meff Runyon. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

(00:00) Public Comment - none this evening

Announcements - there will be another Library Forum on Tuesday, January 23rd at 6:30 PM at the Library to continue the conversation about the building project.

-Reminder: property taxes for 3rd quarter for FY24 are due on February 1. Copies of bills can be obtained from the Town Tax Collector by phone, in person, by email or online.

-Reminder: sewer project-related detour information is available on the Town website.

(2:19) Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 12/07/23

- 12/7/23 – Ms. Baird moved to approve the Fin Comm meeting minutes of 12/0723; Mr. Athanassiou seconded. The Finance Committee voted 9-0-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer, and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Kanaga, Mahoney, O'Meara and Pearl all voting "aye" by roll-call.

(4:00) FinComm 2023 Annual Report draft discussion and vote

Ms. Bruneau reviewed the most recent draft of the Annual Report that Mr Athanassiou had distributed earlier today which includes all proposed changes through this morning. The updated document is now just 4 pages long.

Fin Comm reviewed the draft report prepared and discussed additions and revisions since the 12/7/23 Fin Comm meeting. Accomplishments and achievements are listed, with references to prior Fin Comm recommendations.

Ms. Baird moved to approve the 2023 Annual Report; Mr. Pearl seconded the motion. The Finance Committee voted 9-0-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer, and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Kanaga, Mahoney, O'Meara and Pearl all voting "aye" by roll-call.

Mr. Athanassiou will forward the approved document to Molly Bates with a list of 2023 Fin Comm members (including additions and departures) as requested.

During the Annual Report review process before the holidays, Mr. Abel had posed a number of questions related to priority setting in the Town, including the consideration of energy efficiency

in the development of Town buildings and affordable housing. Mr. Abel and other Fin Comm members discussed energy efficiency requirements and building codes. Mr. Runyon referred to the new “opt-in” energy “stretch code” that the Town considered but did NOT adopt at the October Special Town Meeting. Ms. Kremer noted the Commonwealth’s “Net-Zero by 2050” energy efficiency goal, but there was some confusion as to the applicability of that goal. It was suggested that perhaps the Climate Action Committee could help to clarify the potential impact of the Commonwealth goal on the Town.

(22:00) Discussion of upcoming FY25 budget review process, key dates, and member task responsibilities

Ms. Bruneau had provided background information on the budget review process from last year’s effort. She noted that Town Manager Kim Newman hopes to have draft Budget and CIP materials to Fin Comm and the Select Board by the end of next week as required by the Charter (“on or before January 15”). A final budget will be presented to the Select Board on the 31st of January.

Mr. Athanassiou recommended beginning interviews with Town Department managers sooner, rather than later. Ms. Bruneau noted that, with the departure of DPW Director Tom Daley, it is unclear who will be best prepared to discuss the Enterprise Fund budgets. The new DPW Director Rich Waldo is due to start on March 4, but he won’t be familiar with the Enterprise Funds, or with the details of the DPW budget components. Ms. Bruneau also noted that with Town Hall in transition, any potential restructuring of Enterprise Funds would be likely be postponed until next year.

Using last year’s list of budget review assignments as a guide, Fin Comm confirmed assignments, replacing roles played by now-former members with new members.

(42:00) Discussion of FinComm meetings schedule for the balance of FY24

Ms. Bruneau reviewed the Fin Comm 2024 meeting schedule recently distributed by Mr. Athanassiou and noted that a number of start times have been changed to eliminate potential conflicts with the CPC. Other key dates to note are the opening of the warrant (February 13), Town Meeting (May 13), and joint meetings with the Select Board (February 15 and March 13). The Warrant closes the end of March, and Fin Comm recommendations are due mid-April.

(48:00) Updates

Other Town Manager, Select Board and Finance Director Updates

12/13/23 Select Board Meeting - Ms. Bruneau reviewed highlights from the meeting, including the Cape Cod Chamber’s presentation on a Tourism Marketing Destination District. Also, the proposed project for a boathouse at the CHO for the historic Coast Guard rescue vessel was presented by the architect. Other updates at the meeting: potential zoning amendments, focused on enabling increased housing density downtown; a recap of the October “Outermost Music Festival”; a brief discussion/consideration of affordable housing at 44 Main Street with a vote to refer the idea to the AHC/AHTB for further study.

Also - Town Manager Kim Newman reviewed several memos included in the meeting packet: Orleans and Brewster are working together to apply for a school-related grant focused on regionalization and operational efficiencies. Ms. Newman provided several other updates related to staffing updates (eg, reorganization of the Finance Department; increased staffing for the Rec Department; and interviews for a new DPW Director).

1/3/24 Select Board Meeting - Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou reviewed highlights from the meeting, including a Select Board vote to approve interim financing for Phase II (MHP) of the Town's sewer projects - \$32.9M) and an update from the Library Feasibility Task Force, outlining a number of options for the layout of a new building as well as the status of the state application process. More time was spent discussing "2040 Town Needs" with a focus on a "campus" solution along Eldredge Parkway that might include a new Fire Station (as a separate building) and a (likely new) elementary school as part of a "multi-purpose" building that might also include recreation and/or community center facilities - that might be expandable for senior center needs if/when the COA out-grows its current facility and/or is further imperiled by climate change.

Ms. Bruneau also noted that Mr. Galligan suggested an update by the Nauset High School building project team at a future Select Board meeting.

Liaison Reports as appropriate.

-Ms. Baird discussed the Library building project. She also noted that the Library will be joining many other libraries across the Commonwealth in becoming a "fine free" library. The fines collected in any one year are minimal and often don't cover the cost of administering the program. Also, any fines collected are part of the Town's "General Fund" and not Library funds.

-Ms. Baird noted that the COA has qualified for the Field Grant to study the needs of the Town's aging population. .

-Ms. Bruneau, Ms. Baird and Mr. Athanassiou attended the 12/18/23 OES Committee meeting and hear NRSD Superintendent Clenchy's presentation re the recently revised and approved tuition agreement with Truro and P'Town. The per student tuition starting next fall will be \$23,108, with a 3% increase per year after that. Five year contract but could be updated after 3 years. Mr. Mahoney noted that the proposed tuition was less than the calculated per student cost paid by Orleans; noting, however that Truro and P'Town fund their Special Ed and transportation costs separately. There was further discussion of tuition costs, declining enrollment and staffing challenges.

-Mr. Athanassiou reviewed recent discussions by the Economic Development and Long-Range Capital Planning Committees.

-The Town's updated housing needs assessment was reviewed in the 12/19/23 joint meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee and the Affordable Housing Trust Board. The report will be presented to the Select Board in February.

-Ms. Bruneau provided a number of sewer project-related updates. Replies to questions related to the November 2023 WWTF Operations Report had been shared with Fin Comm before the holidays. Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Kanaga met with AECOM and Town representatives on 12/21/23 to review the sewer connection application process with a number of recommendations made (and accepted) for streamlining that process (and thus reducing the cost for property owners (eg, eliminating multiple engineer reviews of the installed solutions, relying on photos of installations vs. on-site visits, etc.). The MHP project team continues to work on improving communications with business owners and residents impacted by the sewer project.

(1:31:00) Review Meetings Schedule and Items for Future Agendas

- Thursday, January 18 (7pm)
- Thursday, January 25 (7pm)
- Thursday, February 1 (7pm)

(1:31:45) Adjourns

Mr. Mahoney moved to adjourn; Ms. Baird seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 9-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Butler, Secretary

The documents listed below are all in the Finance Committee Drop Box except as noted:

1. 1/4/2024 Fin Comm agenda
2. Draft 12/7/2023 Fin Comm minutes
3. Fin Comm 2023 Draft Annual Report
4. FY24 Fin Comm Budget Review discussion meeting minutes (1/5/23) and Budget Review Assignments
5. Fin Comm FY24 meeting schedule

The minutes for the January 4, 2024 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the January 18, 2024 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. Pearl. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Mahoney, O'Meara and Pearl all voting "aye" by roll-call.**