



# Town of Orleans

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## Finance Committee Meeting

19 School Road Orleans Massachusetts 02653-3699

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 26, 2023 - 7:00 pm

This was a hybrid meeting of the Orleans Finance Committee Meeting, convened in the Nauset Room at Town Hall, with remote participation also provided by Zoom technology. Real-time public access was provided by Orleans Channel 18 on the Town website and cable television.

The meeting was called to order shortly after 7:00 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending and thus constituting a quorum were Committee Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Lynn Bruneau, Tim Counihan, Constance Kremer, Alisa Magnotta (joined at 7:15pm, participating remotely), Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara (participating remotely). Chris Kanaga was absent.

**Guests:** Snow Library Director Tavi Prugno as well as Library Trustees Joan Francolini (Chair), Steve Gass, Sue Lynch, Pamela Ritchie, Deirdre White and Mark Ziomek. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Ops provided technical support.

**Public Comment:** None this evening

**Announcements:** Nomination papers are now available in the Town Clerk's Office for a dozen elected offices to be listed on the Annual Town Meeting Election Ballot on May 16, 2023. Opportunities include 2 Select Board positions; 2 Board of Health; 2 OES Committee members; 2 Snow Library Trustees and 1 NRSD Committee members (all of these are 3-year terms). March 24 is last day to obtain nomination papers; March 28 is the last day to submit them. Forty certified signatures are needed.

-Quarterly property tax payments are due on February 1. Contact the Tax Collectors office at Town Hall w/ any questions.

### **Meet w/ Snow Library Director Tavi Prugno and Representatives of the Board of Trustees for Discussion re the FY24 Budget and Long-Term Planning**

-Snow Library Director Tavi Prugno began by clarifying some of the information in the FY24 Library budget material, noting that in FY22, there were 78 children's programs with 756 participants. Also, the reference to the number of print and non-print subscriptions should have been to the number of volumes.

-Mr. Prugno then reviewed a hand-out (included in the Fin Comm Drop Box) that provided a number of budget-related comparisons over the past 5-6 years and explained the need to keep current w/ the state "Municipal Appropriation Requirement" ("MAR") that sets the guideline for municipal funding for local libraries (and thus the basis for certification for state aid). He also noted participation in the "CLAMS" consortium which includes use of the CLAMS network software which promotes sharing of resources between/among network libraries.

-Mr. Prugno noted the "dip" in numbers during the pandemic period - impacting the FY20 and FY21 budgets, attendance and library programs. He also reviewed the funding available in the Library's 20 trust funds and 6 special revenue accounts which currently total approximately \$823k. This funding is generally restricted to programming and collection development and is generally not intended for

the upkeep of the building.

-Current and anticipated needs include improved technology (eg, more reliable WiFi and live-streaming); more space for meeting rooms, the archival collection and storage; outdoor programming; and improved disability access outside the building. Many of these needs w/be addressed by a new building.

-Mr. Mahoney asked if the pandemic and changes in technology have impacted how people use the Library. Mr. Prugno that that many more Library users are using down-loadable materials than before, and that some patrons are just now returning to the building “in person”. However, the Library still gets circulation “credit” for down-loaded materials (through the ARIS - Annu Report Information Survey). These impacts are common for libraries everywhere.

-Mr. Athanassiou asked about the impact on “Lifetime Learning” programs - some of which include Zoom or hybrid access. Mr. Prugno noted that technology has allowed Lifetime Learning programs to greatly expand their reach to out-of-town, out-of-state, other countries even.

-Mr. Counihan asked who manages the Library’s Trust funds. Mr. Prugno said that these funds are managed by/invested by the Town. Library Trustee Deirdre White provided additional information. She had met w/ Town Treasurer Scott Walked a few years ago. All of the Town’s Trust funds are managed by the Town. The funds are co-mingled with the investment management outsourced to an investment firm that specializes in this. There are very strict rules governing the management of municipal trust funds - limiting equities to 20% (from a defined list of 100 choices) and 80% to fixed income/cash. The preservation of capital is paramount; however, with the limitations, that means that in today’s economy, the Library is losing ground - not keeping up with inflation. But there is no recourse. She note that the process was much improved w/ the arrival of Scott Walker 5+ years ago.

-Mr. Counihan asked if the Library budget w/be impacted by a new building - particularly re staffing and on-going O&M costs. Mr. Prugno said that they expected changes to programming and the use of technology w/ require more/different staffing. They are currently advertising for a part-time programming/publicity resource. Ms. Bruneau suggested that perhaps in time a programming resource c/be shared town-wide as part of a “Community Life” effort.

-Ms. Kremer asked Mr. Prugno for his views on the Library’s role in the community, particularly with regard to different demographics. Mr. Prugno noted that their goal is to provide programming and materials for all demographics. For example, they w/ like a larger, opener children’s space that didn’t impact other Library users.

-Ms. Baird asked about the budget process and whether Mr. Prugno is pressured to fund Library needs from Trust funds rather than the Town budget. Is there a clear definition re Town vs. Trust? Mr. Prugno noted that much Trust funding is specific re its uses - and often clearly not for Library operations/building maintenance. The Trustees feel that the Town s/be funding the building itself.

-Mr. Athanassiou asked if the Library ever exceeds the MAR guidelines - yes, occasionally. Mr. Prugno develops the next budget based on prior year actuals. However, and Mr. Athanassiou pointed out, this doesn’t leave much space for “unknowns”.

-Ms. Bruneau asked about the Library’s book sales - whether the “traffic” has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Mr. Prugno said they welcomed all donations of books/materials.

-Steve Gass, Library Trustee and Chair of the Library Facilities Advisory Committee, then walked everyone through a slide set (included in the Fin Comm Drop Box) outlining the Library’s plans for a new building - reviewing the history of the building, the Board’s Vison and Mission statements and highlights of programming. He also reviewed the Library’s most urgent needs and explained why they can’t simply “fix what’s there”. He noted that the state Public Library Construction Program will soon announce a new round of grant applications for funding which could cover 30-40% of design and construction costs. A feasibility study is the first step needed to apply for this funding.

-He outlined the features of a new Library and reminded all that libraries remain community treasures. Current thinking: build a 25k square foot building (currently 16.5 SF) on the same site; “move out” for 2 years (the way Eastham did) during construction. Approve a feasibility study for \$180k at May 2023 Town Meeting; approve design funding at May 2024 Town Meeting or October 2024 Special Town Meeting (\$2.65M; approve construction funding at May 2025 Town Meeting (\$25M). The Board is scheduled to meet w/ the Select Board on Wednesday, 2/1/23 to review this

same material and seek support for funding the \$180k feasibility study. Ms. Bruneau noted that the CIP already includes \$150k for this feasibility study - this w/be an updated cost figure.

-With regard to the location for the new Library - the preference w/be for the same/current site; however, the State requires applicants to identify at least one alternate site.

-Mr. Mahoney asked whether library resources c/be regionalized. Mr. Gass noted that a very long tradition supports libraries as community-specific; however, there is much sharing of resources and programming already.

-Mr. Counihan asked how the feasibility w/ get onto the Warrant. Mr. Gass noted that they w/ know better after the Select Board meeting. Mr. Athanassiou suggested that the Board send a draft Article to Fin Comm as soon as it was available for sharing.

-Ms. Kremer ask if the potential unpredictability of the grant cycle was built into the project timing. Mr. Gass said yes - with applications due next spring, and answers due next year as well. Then 6 months to confirm town spending commitment.

-Ms. Baird noted that 3-4 years ago, the thinking had been for a 32k square foot building - what has changed? Mr. Gass noted that more current thinking about programming has down-sized the plan to a 25k SF building. They have hired a consultant to focus on programming, with a report due next month to confirm some of their thinking. Library Board Chair Joan Francolini noted that they want to build a realistically-sized building on site - they already own the site - it's ideally/centrally located. Fin Comm could help w/ funding priorities. Ms. Bruneau noted that at the 11/9/22 Select Board meeting, Fin Comm highlighted "Community Life" as a key priority - w/ the Library a key component of "Community Life". Ms. Kremer confirmed that the Library is clearly in sync w/ the Community - well-positioned across all demographics and forward-looking.

-Mr. Gass noted that they don't have draft diagrams yet - but they are bench-marking their thinking against other towns. One known need w/be to be open for more hours - which w/ require additional staffing.

-Board member Sue Lynch noted that at the OCF meeting, several speakers referenced the Library thus clearly an important part of town planning. She noted several new programs - including telescope training and lending and the lending of jigsaw puzzles.

-Mr. Counihan noted that the Town has invested in infrastructure - but less so in community spaces. He encouraged the Library representatives to not be afraid of this effort. Ms. Baird noted the need to think 30-40 years out and referenced libraries in CT that have 2 stories of Library space w/ housing on a third floor - another/newer idea. Ms. Kremer noted the on-going need for meeting space.

-Mr. Athanassiou thanked Mr. Prugno and the members of the Board of Trustees for their participation in tonight's meeting. Several Fin Comm members will be at next week's Select Board meeting and can provide moral support for the Library effort at that meeting.

### **Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

-Thursday, January 5, 2023 - Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 7-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call. Mr. Mahoney abstained as he was not at the January 5 meeting.

-Thursday, January 19, 2023 - Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 5-0-3 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Mr. Athanassiou all voting "aye" by roll-call. Messrs. Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara abstained as they were absent from the 1/19/23 meeting.

-Fin Comm members will continue to draft the meeting minutes in the absence of a Recording Secretary.

### **Review/Update Liaison Assignments/Roles in Preparation for FY24 Budget Reviews; Continued Discussion of Budget Review Strategy**

-Ms. Bruneau will be meeting on Monday, 1/30 w/ Mr. Mahoney and Mr. Counihan to review Enterprise Fund budgets in preparation for subsequent EF Budget Review meetings w/ Tom Daley and Nate Sears.

-Town Clerk meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 2/8 at 1pm (Bruneau/Athanassiou)

-Water Department - TBD (Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Mahoney)

-Ms. Bruneau will contact Mr. Kanaga to confirm dates for meetings w/ the Police Department and Fire Department and the Treasurer/Tax Collector. Mr. Athanassiou will participate in the latter 2 meetings.

-Mr. Athanassiou has sent an email to Walter North to coordinate a meeting w/ the CPC (coming to Fin Comm)

-Ms. Kremer asked about the Rec Department budget - would it be changed following the completion of the Rec Department organization study - and would that study impact the FY24 budget? Ms. Bruneau will follow up w/ Tom Daley and Nate Sears when they meet re the EF budgets.

-Cape Tech is coming to Fin Comm on Thursday, 3/16 - either Superintendent Bob Sanborne or Administrative Director Erin Orcutt

-Mr. Counihan will contact Peter Van Dyck to coordinate a meeting re MIS, Media Ops + Telecoms

-Mr. Athanassiou and Ms. Bruneau will cover the rest of DPW w/ Tom Daley after the EF budget reviews are done. We can add Ms. Kremer to the Rec Dept. discussion then too.

### **May 2023 "Warrant Watch" - Discussion of Warrant Articles Proposed and/or Expected**

-Wastewater Phase 3 - Ms. Bruneau had forwarded the Wastewater Phase 3 planning discussion document from the 1/12/23 Wastewater Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) meeting that included a map of the proposed Phase 3 area (properties abutting and near Pilgrim and Crystal Lakes and Arey's Pond) as well as anticipated Nitrogen removal rates, wastewater gallons per day and estimated project costs. She noted that WMAC continues to discuss the Phase 3 proposal and may add or subtract properties - which w/ impact the project cost. A Warrant Article may be included for May Town Meeting for project design costs. Separately, if bids received for the Meetinghouse Pond phase come in before Town Meeting, and if those costs are higher than project estimates, there c/be a Warrant Article related to that need. The Downtown project is nearing completion with the Wastewater Treatment Plant expected to reach "substantial completion" w/in the next few weeks.

That would allow the Board of Health to send letters to "Downtown" property owners, telling them they have one year to connect. Ms. Bruneau also noted that she had outlined a communication strategy for WMAC consideration ahead of Town Meeting that w/ summarize project information to date and planned - where and when and costs for each phase - including property owner costs

-Mr. Mahoney cautioned against using "average" costs; Ms. Bruneau agreed that these c/be very misleading for property owners. Mr. Athanassiou asked what happens to property owners who need pumps for their properties - when the power fails. And Mr. Counihan referred to the sewer-related disaster in P'Town this past summer (though Ms. Bruneau noted that the P'Town solution is very different "technology" from that used in Orleans).

-Re the need for communication - Ms. Bruneau noted that a year ago, Fin Comm had sent a memo to the Select Board, urging the Select Board to take the lead in communicating w/ the "Downtown" property owners re connection and other costs - but nothing was done - no response.

-Mr. Athanassiou noted that the Select Board is hosting a housing-related meeting on Thursday, February 2 from 4-5:30pm focused on potential housing-related Warrant Articles. Representatives from the Affordable Housing Committee, the Affordable Housing Trust Board, the Planning Board and CPC are invited to participate - with a courtesy invitation to Fin Comm as well. A list of potential topics has been distributed - however the source of some of the topics isn't clear (eg, "multi-family housing by right" is not on the Planning Board's agenda).

-Another topic for the same meeting will be a discussion re the sequencing of Warrant Articles. Some believe that the Warrant already is in an "order" of a kind - but not as clearly as that of the Eastham Warrant. Mr. Mahoney suggested that the most important Articles s/be first, while there is

still a quorum available for discussion and voting. Ms. Kremer suggested that the “word for 2023” s/be “prioritize”.

-Ms. Bruneau noted that the Select Board will begin reviewing the FY24 Budget at their meeting next Wednesday, 2/1. Mr. Athanassiou said that this is not a “joint” meeting, but that Fin Comm members will be recognized if they w/ like to ask any questions during the meeting. In her preliminary review of the FY24 Budget detail, Ms. Bruneau has noted that not many of the department budgets include 5-year look-ahead documents, the way they did last year; however, many of them include a \$35k “ask” for FY25 for a new phone system - written by MIS Director Peter Van Dyck. Mr. Athanassiou suggested asking department managers for their 5-year look-ahead documents when setting up Fin Comm budget review meetings.

-Ms. Bruneau thanked Mr. Athanassiou for reaching out to the Finance Director to request copies of the 12/31/22 month-end/YTD reports for use during our budget review process. She noted that there have been many changes to expense budgets in the past 6 months - sometimes adding to the total expense budget for a department - with no info re who approved the change. More to ask about during the meetings. Also - for some expenses lines for some departments - it looks like they will run out of money for that line item before year-end (eg, electricity). They can always “borrow” from w/in their own expense budget - but have they budgeted enough for that line item for FY24?

## Updates

-Update of Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions (no meeting this week)

### -Liaison Reports

-COA - Ms. Baird reported that the COA is still operating w/out a working dishwasher - and has been since before Christmas. The new one will accomplish “sterilizing” w/ chemicals rather than ultra-hot water - chemicals that will end up in the septic system and ultimately in the surrounding wetlands. The cost estimate - \$6k for the dishwasher and \$2k-4k for the installation - paid from COA Trust funds. COA Director Judi Wilson has chosen not to fight Town Hall for funding.

-Re COA staffing - Ms. Wilson would like to combine 2 hard-to-fill part-time positions into one full-time position. No benefits for the part-time roles, but benefits w/ go w/ the full-time role and thus might attract applicants. Mr. Athanassiou noted that at the October Special Town Meeting, the Town moved away from time off for overtime and is now paying clerical staff for overtime. Perhaps this is a step in the right direction for staffing.

-Ms. Baird said that the COA is also looking for \$15k for a new phone system (frequently impacted by surge protection needs) - but it isn’t clear whether this is different from the \$35K phone system upgrade requests from Peter Van Dyck in many of the 5-year look-ahead documents. We will explore this when we meet w/ Mr. Van Dyck.

-Planning Board (1/24) - Several Fin Comm members watched this meeting. Mr. Athanassiou noted the focus on the Comprehensive Plan in 2023, with the intent to ask for \$100K to hire a consultant to write this. The plan w/ cover 2025 to 2050 (this implies that a plan will not be adopted till 2025); raises the issue of coordination with other “plans” such as the Long-Range Capital Planning (new committee), the recreation / community center plan, etc.; the Economic Vitality Plan is controlled by the Planning Board and implementation of recommendations waiting for appointment of the yet-to-be appointed Assistant Planner. Planning Board is developing a presentation that will explain their view of what the Comprehensive Plan will look like and how other stakeholders will be involved. First discussion can be observed on the Planning Board 2/25 meeting recording. Mr. Athanassiou has forwarded the discussion document.

-Nauset Public Schools (1/26) - Mr. Athanassiou reported that the Joint Meeting of Nauset School Committees started w/ a review of the “Central Office” budget for FY24. There are several employee FTEs full time and part time requested here. Budget wasn’t shared ahead of time so hard to follow

closely. However one of the Budget components shows a 10% increase. One topic that was discussed extensively was school meals. Since the pandemic, school meals were free, first supported by the Federal government and this academic year by the State. There has not been a decision whether the free meals plan will continue in 2023-2024. Eastham has voted to do this for their students in the system. Increases in breakfast and lunch to a combined \$6 per student were approved yesterday. A quick calculation assuming 70% participation of all Orleans students (E/M/H) for the Orleans enrollment shows a total of \$225k-250k per year for free meals. Other towns' "default" is a free meal program based on "means testing".

-Ms. Bruneau noted that this w/be less than half of the \$495k already set aside by the Town for funding Universal Pre-K; however, per the detail in the 12/31/22 month-end/YTD Appropriations Report, only 32 children were signed up for Pre-K funding in November - less than half of the anticipated 66 kids/year. Last June, the balance of the unused Pre-K funding was swept into the General Fund. It isn't clear why this funding is treated differently from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund money - or the OPEB money (\$275/year and \$450/year, respectively) - though clearly the OPEB funding is sent off to pay-down the Town's OPEB debt. But the wording in the Warrant Articles to establish each of these funding streams and to keep them going - these Proposition 2 1/2 general overrides - is exactly the same. So why does the Pre-K money get swept into the General Fund - and note the AHTBB money that isn't being actively used?

-Also - it turns out that the Pre-K money is now tucked away into the Town Administrator's Budget - so for FY24 - the money is included in the budget. Does that mean it is better controlled by the Town Administrator that way? Perhaps there c/be a Warrant Article to re-purpose some of that \$495k funding for other school/children related purposes - like free lunches. Ms. Bruneau had asked previously about the difference between the AHTB funding and the Pre-K funding - but there was no reply - except now the Pre-K money is tucked away in the Town Administrator's budget.

-Mr. Counihan wondered whether - now that it was in the TA's budget - could it be repurposed from there - or even eliminated? Ms. Bruneau suggested that we wait to find out how things work before speculating. She will contact NRSB Superintendent Brooke Clenchy to follow-up.

### **-Other General Updates**

-MA Municipal Association/DLS Webinar - Mr. Athanassiou and Ms. Bruneau and perhaps other Fin Comm members "attended" the MMA/DLC "webinar" yesterday (1/25) at noon. Outstanding "event". Five well-informed, articulate speakers outlining different features/functions of the DLS website, often using "share-screen" capabilities to demonstrate features and tools and the data and capabilities available. Data for all 351 MA cities and towns; a great varieties of "templates" already structured for use. Excellent website. Noted that each city/town has an assigned "advisor" to help/answer questions. Mr. Counihan noted that most towns use MUNIS software so much of the data w/be common format/sources. Ms. Bruneau suggested that as Fin Comm is considering its letter for the May Warrant, there c/be other stats/data to include from the DLS website - different from last year's "debt and taxes" information.

### **Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas Including Who to Invite for Updates**

-Wednes, Feb 1, 8 and 15 - Select Board will be reviewing the FY24 Budget and the FY25-29 CIP; these are not "joint" meetings; however, the Select Board Chair has said that she will call on any Fin Comm members present who have questions during the review/discussion. Also on 2/1 - Library Trustee to Select Board to discuss proposed Warrant Article in support of \$180k for a feasibility study for a new Library. Also on 2/8 - a quarterly update on wastewater projects and planning.

-Thurs, Feb 2 - COA Director Judi Wilson/others to Fin Comm for FY24 Budget Review

-February, March and April - Fin Comm meetings scheduled for every Thursday at 7pm

-Thursday, March 16 - Cape Tech to Fin Comm for FY24 Budget discussion/general update

-Other meetings pending:

-Wastewater/Sewer Projects (Ms. Bruneau to coordinate - likely March)

-CPC/Bond Model (after CPC votes on project for Warrant Article; Mr. Athanassiou to contact

Walter North on timing; also Scott Walker for Bond Model and maybe C.Doane for CPC finances)  
-Housing/AHC/AHTB (Feb/March but likely closer to Warrant clarification)  
-ConsComm (they tee-ing up an Article for support for property maintenance)  
-Charlie Sumner/Cathy Doane (February - but after EF Budget meetings)  
-Recreation - TBD (if/when/whom)

**Adjourn - Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mahoney; second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bruneau, Chairman Emerita

The documents listed below are all in the Fin Comm Drop Box except as noted:

1. January 26, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Snow Library Budget Comparison Information and Organization Chart (from Library Director Tavi Prugno)
3. Snow Library Strategic Plan / Building Plan Presentation (from Library Trustee Steve Gass)
4. Draft minutes for the 1/5/23 Finance Committee meeting
5. Draft minutes for the 1/19/23 Finance Committee meeting
6. Fin Comm Liaison Assignments for Budget Reviews
7. Wastewater Planning for Phase 3 (January 12, 2023 Wastewater Management Advisory Committee meeting document)
8. Planning Board Comprehensive Plan Strategy Document (1/24/23 Planning Board meeting; Planning Board meeting packet)

The minutes for the January 26, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the February 2, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. O'Meara. The vote was 5-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.**