



Town of Orleans

Finance Committee

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2023 MAR 6 1:00PM

ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 9, 2023 – 7:00 pm

This was a hybrid meeting of the Orleans Finance Committee, 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 at 7:00 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Committee Vice Chairman Chris Kanaga, Committee Clerk Elaine Baird (participating remotely) and Committee members Alissa Magnotta (participating remotely), Lynn Bruneau, Tim Counihan, Constance Kremer, Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara (participating remotely).

Guests: Meff Runyon, Select Board member and liaison to the Finance Committee. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

(0:00) Public Comment: There were no public comments.

(1:00) Announcements:

Mr. Athanassiou announced a joint Finance Committee / Select Board Public Hearing to be held on February 16th, hosted by the Finance Committee, to review and discuss the FY25-FY29 proposed Capital Improvement Plan and the FY24 Capital Budget.

Mr. Athanassiou announced that the Property Owner's Guidebook, designed to assist property owners as they prepare for connection to the Town's wastewater collection system, is available for download from the Town's website. It is under Government>Wastewater Infrastructure>Citizens' Communications.

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Water Department had been working on 20 or more houses who were impacted over the recent frigid weekend (February 3-4). She reminded the audience that you can provide the Water Department with contact information and sign up for "Eye on Water". She also suggested getting a lockbox for your house key, installed by the Fire Department, who would have the master lock box key, in the event you are away from your home, providing emergency access.

(4:00) Review / Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 2/02/23

- 2/02/23 – Mr. Counihan moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Ms. Baird seconded. The vote was 6-0-2 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll call vote. Ms. Kremer and Mr. Kanaga abstained as they were absent from the 2/2/23 meeting.

(6:00) Prepare / finalize introductory slide(s) for 02/16/23 Joint Meeting / hearing on FY24 – FY29 CIP. – Ms. Magnotta joined the meeting at this time.

Ms. Bruneau reminded the Committee that this was done last year, where a "context" slide was provided prior to the Town Administrator's presentation for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

and the FY23 Capital Budget. Mr. Athanassiou noted that he provided the Committee the draft Fin Comm slides earlier in the day, and had hard copies available. Ms. Bruneau discussed the “Introductory Comments” presentation to be given by the Committee on February 16th. She noted that the 3 broad topics addressed at last year’s CIP Public Hearing - Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan; Department of Public Works (DPW) and Natural Resources; and Projects on the Horizon, remain the same; however, for this year’s meeting, the topics were re-ordered - with priorities changing during the past year and going forward. Ms. Bruneau provided further detail on some of the projects for the public hearing on February 16th – wastewater, School buildings, Senior Center, etc.

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) voted not to support/bond the “Old Fire House Community Renovation Project”. She also highlighted the housing crisis and projects that are meant to address that issue.

Ms. Kremer suggested changing some of the priorities on the projects listed, and to not remain neutral when the group has stated priorities based on projects that come up over and over again – affordable housing, community center, etc. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of prioritizing the list, and how to go about doing so. Mr. Athanassiou said the order was based on funding, and how projects would be paid for as funding, and need, arises through the 5-year CIP.

Ms. Baird said that the CIP should align with the Strategic Plan, and there was further discussion about compiling the Strategic Plan and how to align it with the CIP. There was a brief discussion about dredging and cleaning up the Town’s waters.

Ms. Kremer, going back to her original comment, said that if the Finance Committee kept defaulting to being neutral, then it would not be able to make decisions on the projects that need to be funded and wanted to see more action taken by the Committee.

(42:00) Review / Update Liaison Assignments / Continued Discussion of Budget Reviews

Mr. Athanassiou noted that budget reviews are progressing at a good pace, and that the Committee is a few weeks ahead of last year. Ms. Bruneau noted that she and Mr. Counihan will be meeting w/ MIS Director Peter Van Dyck and will ask about \$35,000 phone systems updates included in 10+ department budget 5-year look-ahead documents. The Finance Committee further discussed the meetings they would each be attending: Mr. Counihan and Mr. Kanaga will meet with Assessing; Ms. Baird and Ms. Magnotta will meet with the Conservation Department.

There was discussion about Conservation Commission projects and recurring maintenance needs, and increased costs on the “wish list” that surpass the funds available. Ms. Bruneau noted that there was not a revolving fund specific to conservation property maintenance. Ms. Kremer noted that in the prior year, she recalled that there was concern about replenishing the conservation trust fund every few years. Ms. Baird agreed that there was some confusion about where the funds came from.

Ms. Bruneau reviewed several dedicated Revolving Funds and Trust funds and their balances, printed in the Warrant (Revolving Funds) and year-to-date reports (Trust funds). There was further discussion about upcoming budget discussions with department heads.

(1:06:00) May 2023 TM “Warrant Watch”: Discussion of Warrants proposed and / or expected (possible invitations to others for updates)

The Library Board will submit a Warrant article requesting funds for a Feasibility Study that is a requirement for a subsequent request for funding from the State.

Ms. Bruneau discussed the placeholder Warrant Article that the Select Board placed relative to the wastewater project. She discussed the timeline for connectivity to the water and sewer system, and future potential communication efforts. Communication efforts would describe the funding of the project for each phase and property owner. Ms. Kremer noted that there was a lot of confusion between downtown-area property owners, noting that people were looking for more information. Ms. Bruneau said that there was information on the Town's website under Wastewater Infrastructure. Mr. O'Meara noted that it would be good for the Finance Committee to go back and track costs and projections going forward, as it has an impact on the property owners. There was further discussion about the need for informative, directed communication efforts.

(1:28:00) Updates

Update of Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions - 2/18/23 Select Board meeting

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief presented their budget, and that the entire department was in the audience showing solidarity. Ms. Bruneau said that there was support from the Select Board for 8 additional hires, with a \$1 million dollar override.

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Police Chief presented his budget which focused on salaries, as well as housing. One of the officers is leaving for Barnstable for \$20,000 more and a benefits package that is paid 90% by the town (vs. 65% paid by Orleans).

(1:33:00) Liaison Reports as appropriate

Mr. Athanassiou reviewed the joint meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee and Affordable Housing Trust Board where there was discussion around raising the AMI% and whether or not there was a need for two separate trust boards. Having two trust boards could put them in competition with each other for funding. Mr. Athanassiou noted that there was some form of State structure for the Trust Board.

Mr. Athanassiou noted that the CPC has completed most of their work and thus they will not be meeting every Thursday immediately prior to the Fin Comm meetings - giving Fin Comm an opportunity to start earlier. He will follow up to confirm with CPC Chairman Walter North and with Media Ops. Ms. Bruneau said that the CPC has voted on their list of grant applications; she said that Old Town Hall was not approved. There was further discussion of CPC projects in the pipeline.

(1:40:00) Other general updates

Mr. Athanassiou asked if the Finance Committee if they were willing to start earlier with the CPC meeting time now available as noted above. The group was in consensus to start earlier than 7:00 pm, going forward, as they are able.

(1:47:00) Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas Including others to Invite for Updates

The Finance Committee will begin meeting at 6:30 pm, or as posted moving forward.

(1:48:00) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mahoney and seconded by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 9-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Magnotta and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. February 9, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft minutes for the February 2, 2023 Finance Committee meeting
3. Draft "Introductory Comments" presentation for the 2/16/23 CIP/Capital Budget Public Hearing
4. Select Board meeting packet for the 2/8/23 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)