



# Town of Orleans

## Finance Committee

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ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

*Jennifer Higgins*  
23 MAR 17 10:16 AM

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 9, 2023 – 6:15 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 6:15 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Committee Vice Chairman Chris Kanaga (who joined the meeting at 6:45pm), Committee Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Lynn Bruneau, Tim Counihan, Constance Kremer and Peter O'Meara (participating remotely). Alissa Magnotta and Ed Mahoney were absent.

**Guests:** Meff Runyon, Select Board member and Liaison to the Finance Committee, and Walter North, CPC Chair. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

#### **(0:01) Public Comment:**

Kevin Higgins, Chair of the Veterans Day/Memorial Day Committee, spoke about a potential warrant article for May Town Meeting, which relates to Veterans Memorial Park at Academy Place. He noted that the Park, is not currently accessible to all mobilities, and the Committee is requesting funds to install and maintain a sidewalk and other improvements to the Park. He noted that a 501(c)3 non-profit organization has been established to help raise funds for the Park, including the addition of memorials in honor of more recent members of the armed forces.

#### **(11:27) Announcements:**

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Barnstable County Aquifund program has been expanded and re-named. It now includes sewer connections as well the replacement of failed septic systems. There are 0-4% interest loans for year-round homeowners, depending on financial need. More information can be found on the County website: <https://www.capecod.gov/departments/health-environment/programs-services/water-and-wastewater/community-septic-management-loan-program-csmpl/>

#### **(14:30) Meet with CPC regarding FY24 funding decisions and proposed Town Meeting Warrant Article(s)**

– Fin Comm Chairman Athanassiou proposed taking this agenda item out of order as a courtesy to Fin Comm's guest, Water North, CPC Chairman.

Mr. North briefly reviewed the purpose and charge of the CPC, as adopted in 2005 under the Community Preservation Act. He reviewed the list of FY24 funding decisions which fall into the categories of Open Space, Recreation, Housing and Historic. Projects being funded for FY24 are:

- Village Green Walkway – Phase 1 Accessible Walkway – \$35,000
- Snow Library Preservation – Preservation Assessment – \$8,050
- Juniper Hill affordable housing – 46 units – \$20,000
- AHTB – general funding for affordable housing – \$500,000
- Federated Church restoration of historic organ – \$8,000

- Lower Cape Housing Workshop– \$7,500
- Veterans Memorial – upgrades and maintenance – \$275,000
- Open Space – administration funding – \$12,000
- Orleans Historic Preservation – Early Nauset Arch. Survey – \$7,500
- Orleans Historic Preservation – Historic Property Research – \$7,500
- French Cable Museum – restoration of siding, trim – \$36,750
- Putnam Farm Picnic Tables – \$3,762
- CHO – CG36500 Boat Preservation Structure – \$55,000
- Bandstand – Phase I bandstand restoration – \$29,500
- NW Schoolhouse – repair spouting, fire suppression system – \$58,978
- Academy Playhouse – Phase II renovations – \$128,265

Ms. Kremer asked Mr. North about the Northwest Schoolhouse; Mr. North spoke to the history of the project and funds expended to-date. Ms. Kremer confirmed that the CPC felt the property is a good investment for historic and recreation purposes. There was further discussion about the parcel.

Mr. North noted that the process is for the CPC to receive applications, and then to make recommendations to the Town at Town Meeting for appropriations of funds. Mr. Runyon (as a former Select Board Liaison to the CPC) provided insight into the CPC’s decision-making and how the Select Board views the parcels and projects listed. He noted that the applicants are typically required to provide financial statements with their applications for funding and that most are also encouraged to see additional funding in the form of grants, etc.

**(58:00) Review / Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 3/02/23**

- 3/02/23 – Mr. Counihan moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Ms. Baird seconded. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga and O’Meara all voting “aye” by roll call.

**(59:00) Discuss Nauset Regional School District Budget(s) for FY24 in preparation for the 3/15/23 Select Board / FinComm Joint Meeting**

Mr. Athanassiou note a change in the schedule - the Fin Comm/Select Board joint meeting for the review of the school budgets has been moved to March 22. This will include Orleans Elementary School, the Nauset Regional School District (including the High School, Middle School, Region Only and Central Office budgets) and Cape Tech. The meeting will begin at 5 PM on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

On Thursday, March 16, George Meservey and Marsha Allgeier will be attending the Fin Comm meeting to discuss all of the proposed housing-related Warrant Articles.

**(1:03:00) Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas Including others to Invite for Updates**

- Mr. Athanassiou took this agenda item out of order to review the following:
  - March 15 (Wed): Joint meeting with the Select Board for a Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget.
  - March 16: George Meservey to discuss housing-related T.M. Warrants

- o March 22 (Wed): Joint meeting w/ the Select Board to review all school budgets (OES, Cape Tech and the Nauset District including High School, Middle School, Region Only and Central Office)
- o March 23: Fin Comm meeting
- o March 30: Fin Comm meeting with C. Sumner and C. Doane

**(1:04:00) Continue Discussion on Fin Comm Town Meeting “FY24 Annual Letter”**

There was discussion about language to use for the taxpayers to understand, without getting too technical with financial/other terminology. Mr. Athanassiou noted that there are several online resources available for those who wish to learn more. The Fin Comm was in agreement to craft the letter so it is easy to read and understand, and gets the message to the taxpayers in a meaningful manner. Ms. Bruneau will compile the notes and recommendations of the Fin Comm and bring that back for review. She has received input from Mr. Mahoney re “finance/financial strategy” and Mr. Counihan indicated that he has drafted a paragraph on the same topic. Ms. Bruneau will organize a small group “huddle” to continue work on that topic.

**(1:12:00) Review / Continue Discussion of Fin Comm FY24 Budget Reviews / Preliminary discussion on viewpoints for Joint Select Board / Fin Comm Budget Hearing of 3/15/23**

Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou met with Tom Evers, Building Commissioner, where they discussed hiring, staffing, and a succession strategy. Additionally, there was discussion of effective enforcement of the Town Bylaws related to building and zoning. Mr. Runyon asked if it would be appropriate to ask this department to be responsible for the enforcement of signage, zoning, etc.; Ms. Bruneau said yes, in the absence of another authority.

Ms. Bruneau discussed additional recent budget reviews including the Beaches Enterprise Fund. She noted the heavy allocation of Shellfish/Harbormaster resources the Beached EF budget. There will be several detailed follow-up questions addressed at the March 30<sup>th</sup> meeting with Cathy Doane and Charlie Sumner.

Mr. Counihan reviewed his meeting with the Assessing Department. In 2022, values increased 10.5% and 28% in FY23; another increase is expected this year. There was further discussion of property values and new construction anticipated to be added in this fiscal year.

Mr. O’Meara has drafted the notes from the Health Department budget review and Ms. Baird will finalize the Library write-up.

Several Departments have begun efforts related to the new “Laserfiche” project. Ms. Bruneau noted that in the recent budget review meeting with Media Operations, it was understood that MIS Director Peter Van Dyck would be providing an MIS update for the Select Board sometime this Spring and it was suggested that perhaps “Laserfiche” functions could be demonstrated at the same time.

Ms. Bruneau had provided a document outlining a number of suggested topics for Fin Comm discussion at the March 15 Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget. Topics included debt service for the High School Building Project and for the Town’s sewer projects; the Budget Policy; the use of Departmental Trust funds for the repair/maintenance of Town property; the possibility of “sun-setting” two of the Enterprise Funds at the end of FY24; reconsideration of “Pay-as-you-throw” at

the Transfer Station; and departmental succession planning. Mr. Runyon, Mr. Counihan and Mr. O'Meara provided additional comments about Pay-As-You-Throw.

**(2:02:00) May 2023 TM “Warrant Watch”: Discussion of Warrant Articles proposed and / or expected (see current version of Warrant Index / possible invitations to others for updates)**

Mr. Athanassiou provided the Fin Comm with the Warrant Index, an updated version is expected to come later this week. Ms. Bruneau noted that #24 – Fund Old Firehouse Renovation – was removed and might come back in the Fall. She also noted that #56 – Additional Compensation for Assessors – was also removed. The Select Board voted to “place” a majority of the proposed Article on the Warrant at their meeting last evening (3/8/23) but waited to vote pending the return of Mr. Mathison so that their votes recorded in the printed Warrant would show a full count of all 5 Select Board members.

**(2:08:00) Updates**

Update of Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions

Mr. Athanassiou noted that the majority of the meeting was focused on the Warrant, which was discussed above.

Mr. Athanassiou said that the Planning Board is focused on updating the Town’s Comprehensive Plan - planning their effort for updating the Plan, beginning with the involvement of key Town Boards/Committees and leveraging the Cape Cod Commission’s “Local Comprehensive Plan Lite” approach. He discussed the Town Administrator Search Committee, who will be meeting again this week.

**(2:08:30) Liaison Reports as appropriate**

Mr. Athanassiou discussed the Affordable Housing Committee and the Trust Board that met this week, focused on housing-related Warrant Articles.

Ms. Bruneau said that the Town’s Wastewater Treatment plant “officially” opened for septage delivery on Monday (3/6/23) and that the Board of Health will be sending letters to property owners in the downtown sewer district this week, advising them of the need to connect their property to the sewer line within the next 12 months. Also the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee will focus on sewer project, timing and funding communications at its next meeting (3/23/23).

**Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn by Mr. Counihan and seconded by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga and O’Meara all voting “aye” by roll call. The meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. March 9, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft CPC Warrant Article for May 2023 Town Meeting: “Fund Community Preservation Act Program Budget”
3. Draft March 2, 2023 Fin Comm Meeting Minutes
4. Fin Comm FY24 Budget Review Write-Ups for Building Department and Beaches Enterprise Fund
5. Draft/Proposed Fin Comm FY24 Budget Questions
6. Draft Warrant Index for the May 2023 Town Meeting (from 3/8/23 Select Board mtg)
7. Draft FY24 Budget Adjustments/”Wish List” (from 3/8/23 Select Board meeting)
8. Select Board meeting packet for the 3/8/23 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)

The minutes for the March 9, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the March 16, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Mr. Counihan; second by Ms. Baird. The vote was 6-0-2 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanssiou, Counihan, Kanaga and O’Meara all voting “aye” by roll-call. Ms. Magnotta and Mr. Mahoney abstained as they were absent from the March 9 meeting.**