



# Town of Orleans

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## Finance Committee Meeting

19 School Road Orleans Massachusetts 02653-3699

### MEETING MINUTES April 28, 2022 - 7:00pm

This was a virtual meeting of the Orleans Finance Committee convened via remote participation using “Zoom” webinar technology with real-time public access provided by Orleans Channel 18 on the Town website and cable television.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Finance Committee Chairman Lynn Bruneau. Also present and thus constituting a quorum were Vice Chairman Nick Athanassiou and Clerk Tim Counihan as well as Committee members Elaine Baird, Lou Ciavarra, Constance Kremer, Ed Mahoney and Peter O’Meara. Chris Kanaga joined the meeting at 8:13pm.

**Guests:** Select Board member and Fin Comm liaison Kevin Galligan. Mia Baumgarten from Media Ops provided technical support for the meeting,

**Public Comment:** none this evening

#### Announcements

Real Estate and Personal Property Tax bills were mailed in January - including the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter installment bill which is due on or before Monday, May 2. If you have misplaced or did not receive your bill in January, you can obtain a copy online from the Town website - or call the Tax office for the amount due. Bills can be paid online or by mailing your payment or dropping payment off at the Tax office or at the Drop Box at Town Hall.

The Town’s IT/Media Ops Dept is continuing their workshops to help community members learn more about the new Town website. “Drop in” workshops in the Marion Craine room at the Library on 4/29/22 and 5/13; 5/20 and 6/3 and 6/17.

Info re the Wastewater project on the “Government” page of the Town website w/ info about the Downtown project currently underway as well as plans for the MHP area. Also - if you have questions - whether about connecting for the Downtown area, “first flush” scheduled for 9/1/22 or the next phase/MHP - contact the “Sewer Ombudsman” Reggie Donoghue. His contact info is posted. New “Sewer System FAQ” bulletin distributed recently - 4 pages of Frequently Asked Questions about the project, betterment assessments and getting connected - also on the website.

2022 beach stickers and transfer station stickers - applications mailed recently or available on-line; no sticker office this year - all by mail or on-line. Further info on the Town website.

BOWSC voted recently to begin water use restrictions effective May 1 - through September 30 - unless things change dramatically in Town’s water table. All non-essential water use restricted to 2 days a week; before 9am or after 5pm.

On Saturday, April 30 - the kick-off event at Veterans' Memorial Park at Academy Place to introduce the plans for the renovation and enhancement of the park. Tours, live music with schematic of the proposed changes. The intent is to update and beautify the space, enabling Park-wide improves that will pay tribute to veterans of all wars.

Annual Town Meeting is Monday 5/9/22 at 6pm in the Middle School gymnasium. Childcare will be provided beginning at 5:45pm - 3yrs+ - need to register for that (on-line). The printed Warrant is available at Town Hall; electronic version on the Town website.

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

Minutes from April 14, 2022:

**Motion by Ms. Baird to approve the April 14, 2022 meeting minutes; second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 6-0-2 with Mmes. Bruneau and Baird and Messrs. Ciavarra, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting aye by roll-call. Ms. Kremer and Mr. Athanassiou abstained as they were absent from the April 14 meeting.**

Minutes from April 21, 2022:

**Motion by Ms. Baird to approve the April 21, 2022 meeting minutes; second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 7-0-1 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Ciavarra, Counihan and Mahoney all voting aye by roll-call. Mr. O'Meara abstained as he was absent from the April 21 meeting.**

### **Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting**

#### **Continue Voting on Town Meeting/Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles if Needed**

Information still pending on 2 Articles - STM 1 - Bills of Prior Years; STM 2 - Fund Unanticipated Employee Buyouts. Anyone interested in re-voting any other Articles at this time? (None)

### **Continue Follow-Up Discussions**

No new information regarding the "Blue Economy" Article. The Select Board meeting on 4/27/22 was "pre-TM meeting" with Town Counsel, Moderator and Town Clerk. John Kelly went through complete Warrant very quickly. Select Board has not yet decided which of them will introduce which Articles though typically/recently it's been divided in "blocks", each of them introducing a share of the Articles.

Going through the Articles, John Kelly did clarify why some Articles required a 2/3 vote and others a 3/4 vote vs. a simple majority. Typical 2/3 vote w/be funding for and spending from a Stabilization Fund; also debt exclusion Articles (Prop 2 1/2). Typical 3/4 vote would be an Article for a project not included in prior year CIP. It's helpful to understand the "rules".

John Kelly noted a public hearing on 5/04/22 regarding sewer usage fee structure; and BOH public hearing on 5/05/22 regarding transfer station fees. Kevin Galligan noted that Beach EF budget includes assumptions re Chatham over-sand beach fees - will Beach EF budget need to be amended before TM? Apparently not.

The Police Union and Fire Dept Union articles will most likely be indefinitely postponed.

Kevin Galligan made a point of noting that Fin Comm voted 1-6 against Article 49 - Free Cash Transfer. John Kelly noted that Free Cash can't be used to balance the budget. Nothing was said about the Fin Comm discussion about this Article and the reasoning behind our vote.

Regarding the Charter amendment Articles – John Kelly noted that any approved Charter amendments would go to the State Atty General's office to confirm OK against state laws, etc. Then back to Town to vote at the ballot - likely next May (year from now). If approved then, once more OK'd in Boston, then they go into effect.

Article 18 - Adopt Sewer Assessment General Bylaw – John Kelly noted that this is a general bylaw so just a simple majority needed. This afternoon at OCF session - questions about what if it doesn't pass. Alan McClellan said full cost would be on taxpayers.

Article 67 - Authorize Changes in Fee Schedules - during Public Comment, Tracy Murphy, Chair of the Rec Advisory Committee, spoke about the proposed change to the fee for Adult Rec Programs from \$15 to \$30. She said that the RAC didn't know about the proposed change and when she talked to Rec Dept Director, Alan Harrison, he initially said that he didn't know about the proposed change - but then subsequently an email message from January was discovered - and he then remembered that he was aware of the proposed change. It's possible that the Rec Dept. has been charging higher fees for Adult Programs than approved by Town Meeting - and Tracy Murphy called for fiscal oversight of the Rec Dept. She also asked about the timing of support for summer programming for the Rec Dept - with May starting soon and nothing resolved. Regarding Article 67 - during the review of the Warrant – John Kelly noted that the proposed change to the Adult Program fee would be deleted - thus staying at \$15.

Articles 71 and 72 (zoning bylaws) - require 2/3 majority votes (because they're zoning bylaws).

STM Article 7 - Fire Dept Traffic Light Petition - Mark Mathison noted that Town was to have contacted Petitioner about this 5 weeks ago - but nothing has happened - no follow-up. Town was to investigate options for discussion with Petitioner. John Kelly said Tom Daley was to follow up - and that options were known: stay with flashing amber, or steady green. Mathison insisted no follow-up with Petitioner. Property owner was there - she tried to speak, to confirm no contact - but Meff shut her down. Follow-up (next steps) unclear.

Andrea Reed noted that there seems to be increased concern in town about debt - bubbling up in town. John Kelly noted that Capital Plan is built into debt projections.

Ms. Bruneau confirmed that she has sent a list of the most recent Fin Comm votes (post Warrant publication) to Moderator David Lyttle, with a list of Fin Comm speakers for Town Meeting.

### **Continue Discussion Fin Comm Speakers/Focus for Town Meeting**

-Ms. Bruneau to talk once about EF's, Town/School Budget, CIP - and key points from Fin Comm Letter to the Warrant (Articles 8-14 plus the Letter)

-Article 16 - Fund HAC/107 Main Street - Ms. Kremer for "aye" vote; Mr. Counihan for "nay" votes (plural)

-Articles 18-22 - Ms. Bruneau to talk once to support sewer assessment bylaw plus MHP-related Articles

- Article 49 - Free Cash Transfer - Ms. Bruneau to address 1-6 Fin Comm vote
- Article 50 - Blue Economy vote was 5-2 - Probably don't need to speak unless someone asks about split vote.
- Article 62 - Ms. Baird for unanimous "nay" vote re Charter Amendment on Quorum (0-6)
- STM Article 4 - Mr. Mahoney maybe to address 2 "no" votes re electric charge station if "no" votes want to be represented

**Continue Discussion - Fin Comm Budget Review Reports with Focus on Findings and Recommendations and Follow-up**

-Ms. Bruneau forwarded the summary of the 5-year look-ahead worksheets on Monday that Ms. Baird created last weekend and Mr. Athanassiou converted to a spreadsheet. How best to use this information? As we go through each of these reviews, focus on findings and recommendations and any short-term follow-up - especially any from newer information. Ms. Bruneau will forward the summary and spreadsheet to Kevin Galligan.

-Health Dept- If the Town establishes a short-term rental policy with licensing and fees (possibly in the Fall), then the Health Department might have to inspect these rental properties. Licensing fees might cover the cost of additional resources. New permitting requirements also related to sewers for restaurants - more inspections, more resources - but the trade-off w/ fewer septic system inspections over time. The Department has been short-staffed due to retirements. Challenging to find replacements with Orleans at the low end of the pay scale and housing challenges. No 5-year plan.

-Conservation Dept – Conservation is responsible for maintaining all of the town-owned conservation properties. Ms. Baird feels that the department doesn't have enough funds to take care of all of this land and likely they need to look for additional revenue, perhaps looking at fee structure. Follow-up - lack of clarify re balance in Trust Fund; original source(s) of that Fund; and depletion of that Fund. The State Wetlands Protection Act and the closely-related Town Wetlands Protection act govern protection of Town wetlands and fine/fee structure as well as use of proceeds. Annual Revolving Fund for \$25k for property maintenance; any remaining balance stays in that account at year-end. No 5-year plan.

-COA – The 5-yr plan includes \$15k for updating the telephone system, as well as \$5k/year for funding from the Town for on-going maintenance of the grounds. The COA has applied to the CPC for funding the actual rehabilitation of the gardens. Working with the Town on the installation of a refurbished generation to provide back-up power, at least to cover part of facility's needs. Concern that budget for utilities is underestimated; however, overall Town budget has been adjusted to accommodate some of the anticipated increased cost of electricity and heating fuel. Recent system failures at the COA point to the need for more preventive maintenance, and a closer look at long-term needs for more/different space - perhaps at a different location with climate change related risks at the current facility (flood zone).

-Library – Library Director Tavi Prugno would like more security for the exterior of the building; other town employees feel stressed about lack of security. They would also like to get going on the "new" library, even though there's no state funding (presentation made to the Select Board at a recent meeting). The Friends of the Library are going to take on some of the fundraising; however, \$150k has been added to the CIP for FY24 for a feasibility study. Mr. O'Meara commented that given the size of the library, debt load and operational cost of the project in relation to the size of Orleans, a self-funded Library expansion may not be feasible.

Use of the Library has changed profoundly since the onset of the pandemic with in-person visits down substantially. Ms. Bruneau commented on the number of projects and purchases funded in FY21 with Library Trust Fund and state aid money (\$7260+). The Library budget is generally set to barely meet state requirements for books, other materials.

-Planning Board – Mr. Athanassiou noted that funding for a new assistant director (salary and benefits) has been added to the FY23 Town budget. Based on recent Planning Board discussions, it is likely that this new player would focus on Economic Development and grant writing. The 5-year plan included \$200k in FY24 to support the updating of the Town’s 2006 Comprehensive Plan which is described as needing a complete re-write (the dollars are based on what Harwich allocated for their re-write). The Town’s Conservation, Recreation & Open Space Plan (CROS Plan) certification expires in February 2024 so that plan will need to be updated as well. Eligibility for state reimbursement grants for open space programs is contingent upon having a state-approved CROS Plan. The 5-year plan also includes \$20k/year for water quality monitoring, a program that has historically relied on volunteers; however, absent the ability to schedule volunteers, funding w/be needed for the program.

-Assessor – Several costs have been cut in the Assessor’s Department since Brad Hinote took over. Previously, much of the fieldwork had been out-sourced but is now performed by Town resources. A three year valuation cycle was just completed with the value for most properties going up by 10%. The town is allowed to raise the property taxes by 2.5%, but can raise rates based on new construction by another 1%. Mr. Hinote also runs the passport office in town and generates approximately \$10k per year of revenue. The 5-year plan includes the cost of support for implementing a real estate exemption program in town (primarily for processing exceptions).

-MIS/Telecoms/Media Ops – The town website was recently updated to Civic Plus. Updated camera/audio equipment has been installed in both meeting rooms in Town Hall (\$52k). MIS is planning on 5-year program for digitizing all Town work files. Also upgrading office software and a Warrant Article has been proposed for on-line financial reporting (\$31k). Some discussion re upgrading to a VOIP phone system which could reduce operating costs. The 5-year plan for Telecoms also includes a new phone system for Town Hall in FY25 (\$35k). The 5-year plan for Media Ops includes Public Service Announcement services and Closed Captioning software as well as remote A/V set-up for the Emergency Operations Center at the Police Department and other Town buildings. The Town was recently recognized by the County for its cyber security awareness for its extensive training programs.

-Next week, May 5 - finish anything not done tonight; then EF’s plus Bldgs & Facilities; Rec  
-May 19 - finish anything; then Water, 3 schools, Fire, Police, Tax/Treas and Town Clerk and begin to summarize specific and general findings, recommends and follow-up

### **Continue Discussion - Fin Comm Focus/Priorities Going Forward**

-Affordable/workforce housing

-School lunch programs - Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou will be meeting w/ NRSD Nutrition Director on May 6 for an update re NRSD free lunch programs

-Short-term rental tax impact fees - schedule follow-up meeting w/ Eastham Town Administrator for an update on Eastham family friendly programs, strategies, results (including school lunches, universal pre-K and various housing-related strategies and revenue-related strategies)

-Residential exemption tax

### **General Updates Including Recent Select Board/Other Meetings**

-OCF Forum this afternoon - betterments and general override discussion and Q&A. Some questions re when Pilgrim and Crystal? When prioritize other parts of Town? Alan McClennen had noted beforehand - a mtg on 5/11 to talk priorities - eg, considering Fire Station, freshwater ponds, etc. Going forward, phases maybe be smaller chunks to fit better into debt schedule. Questions about decommissioning septic system; about private roads/easements. For schools - question about per student costs but seemed focused on Truro & P'Town so answered that way (\$20k tuition w/ towns paying transportation and SPED separately). Seemed to be some confusion re \$627k override and 27 kids as though they caused the override - yes, but no. Shift in allocation PLUS overall school budget increase. Handouts for wastewater and schools. Hopefully they will be posted on OCF and/or Town website.

-Select Board Meeting on 4/27/22 - Public Comment from Tracy Murphy as noted above; other Public Comment re Eversource Substation trees/planting - discussed at length later in meeting

-Pre-Town Mtg discussion as noted above - 5:20-5:55pm

-Met as Park Commissioners with Chatham Select Board to discuss Nauset Beach Agreement extension - no change; Beach EF assumes \$75k cap on revenue sharing to Chatham so that EF budget might have to change before TM; however, apparently will simply "absorb" changes within budget flexibility.

-Met with Eversource reps regarding substation vegetation and screening - lengthy discussion; much audience input - unclear what next steps are; who responsible for what/when; who has ball.

-Liaison reports - Mathison on Gov. Prence - a next step will be to talk to Chamber and local businesses for input; narrowing to 3 scenarios for next consultant meeting

-BOH to consider masks for TM

-COA - MHerman read letter from Anita Rogers, chair of COA Board - strong positive/grateful - recognized hard work of everyone through pandemic and recent challenges

### **Finance Committee Liaison Reports**

-Gov. Prence - mtg notes: consultant view that over 65's over-represented in survey; how to reach other demographics and renters? Development costs \$400-500k/unit on Cape without land cost; smaller projects cost more/unit.

-Planning Board - Streetsense presentation Tues, 4/26 - 4 Fin Comm members watched/were there - only 7 on Zoom; survey just 112 responses; 4 Fin Comm members to huddle Monday am to craft responses per George Meservey's request for feedback on the draft report.

Fire Dept - tours, video provide good insight re need for new station (video is not Orleans, but helps with overall understanding; Orleans-specific video to be developed)

### **Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas**

Thurs, 5/05/22 - more Budget Reviews; final prep for TM - review talking points

Mon, 5/09/22 - pre-TM meeting at 5:30pm; TM at 6pm in gymnasium

Thurs, 5/19/22 - TM post-mortem; Tom Finan for next Fire/Rescue Feasibility Study update

**Adjourn: Motion by Mr. Mahoney to adjourn, second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 7-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer and Messrs., Athanassiou, Ciavarra, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting aye by roll-call. Mr. Kanaga had left the meeting before adjournment.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Faber, Recording Secretary

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

1. April 28, 2022 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft meeting minutes for the April 14, 2022 Finance Committee meeting
3. Draft meeting minutes for the April 21, 2022 Finance Committee meeting
4. May 9, 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
5. Fin Comm Summary of 5-year look-ahead worksheets and spreadsheet
6. Health Department Budget Review Write-up (Baird, O'Meara)
7. Conservation Department Budget Review Write-up (Baird, Kremer)
8. Council on Aging Budget Review Write-up (Baird, O'Meara)
9. Snow Library Budget Review Write-up (Baird, Counihan)
10. Planning Board Budget Review Write-up (Athanassiou, Baird)
11. Assessor Budget Review Write-up (Counihan, Kanaga)
12. MIS/Telecoms/Media Ops Budget Review Write-up (Counihan, Bruneau)
13. Select Board Meeting Packet for the meeting of 4/27/22 (Select Board website)

The minutes for the April 28, 2022 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the May 19, 2022 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 6-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Counihan, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting aye by roll-call.**

Timothy R. Counihan 6/14/22  
Timothy Counihan Clerk Finance Committee