



Town of Orleans

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Finance Committee Meeting

19 School Road Orleans Massachusetts 02653-3699

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 5, 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, Chris Kanaga, Constance Kremer, Ed Mahoney and Peter O’Meara.

Guests: Mia Baumgarten from Media Ops provided technical support for the meeting,

Public Comment: none this evening

Announcements

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 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 is also on the website - 4 pages of Frequently Asked Questions about the project, betterment assessments and getting connected. 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. Per DPW Director Tom Daley, mail-in applications are back-logged a couple weeks; on-line applications are faster; however, current stickers are valid through June 30.

Water bills arrived recently with info about water 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.

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. TBD whether masks will be required. Also, as discussed at last night’s Select Board meeting, the Town plans to “live-stream” the meeting on Channel 18 for those who can’t make it to the meeting in the gymnasium. However - MA Law requires that to vote, you have to be there in person. So if you want to have your vote counted - plan to be there well before 6pm to register and pick up your clicker for electronic voting.

Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

-4/28/22 Finance Committee meeting - no draft yet

Approval of Finance Committee Letter to Planning Director/Others re the "Streetsense" Economic Development Plan for the Town of Orleans

-On Wednesday, Ms. Bruneau forwarded a proposed/draft letter from the Finance Committee to Planning Director, George Meservey, with copies to the Planning Board, Select Board and Town Administrator. On Tuesday, 4/26/22 - Ms. Baird, Mr. Athanassiou and Ms. Bruneau had watched the Planning Board meeting on Zoom and Mr. Counihan was there in person (in the Nauset Room) for the "Streetsense" (consultant) presentation of their "Town of Orleans Economic Development Plan". The plan presented was the April 26 version - they had made a similar presentation to the Planning Board on/about March 9.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Meservey noted that they would be accepting feedback on the report until Friday, May 6. During the Zoom meeting, Mia Baumgarten (Media Ops) said there were only 7 people participating via Zoom (3 were Fin Comm) - and we later learned that Mr. Counihan was the only one in the audience in the Nauset Room. Ms. Bruneau raised her hand during the Zoom meeting and said that the members from Fin Comm watching the meeting would get together and get back to Meservey with comments on the report. The 4 Fin Comm members met on Monday of this week to collaborate on a Fin Comm viewpoint - which is the letter that was forwarded.

"Collaboration" included agreeing who the letter should go to, that it s/be a letter (not just email) and that we should get a Fin Comm vote on the letter. We also agreed that as stated at the end of the Planning Board meeting last week by Planning Board member John Ostman, the report provides a good beginning. Thus we agreed that there was no point in providing detailed comments about the consultant's reports - comments about what we didn't like about some of the details in the report. The draft Fin Comm letter includes a list of 8 recommendations for moving forward. And then a hook to some of what we (Fin Comm) have been saying in our Letters to the Warrant for the past 3 years. And then a closing paragraph.

After a discussion about the draft and general agreement regarding the letter as written: **Motion by Mr. Counihan to approve the proposed letter from the Finance Committee regarding the Economic Development Plan, second by Mr. Athanassiou. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting aye by roll-call.** Ms. Bruneau will forward the letter to the addresses with a copy to Fin Comm members after tonight's Fin Comm meeting.

Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Continue Voting on Town Meeting/Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles if Needed

-Select Board meeting packet this week included new info on 2 STM Articles that we could vote on tonight. Ms. Bruneau has asked John Kelly's office to be sure to provide Fin Comm with any "new news" about any other Warrant Articles - any other changes before TM.

-Select Board voted to "indefinitely postpone" Articles 46 and 47 - Police and Fire Union Articles. Fin Comm had noted "Recommendation at TM" but with "indefinitely postpone", no need to do anything further.

-STM Article 1 - Pay Bills of Prior Years - \$192.67 for Cape & Islands Tire

-STM Article 2 - Fund Unanticipated Employee Buyouts (\$20k)

Motion by Mr. Athanassiou to recommend Article 1 for the Special Town Meeting - “Pay Bills of Prior Years”; second by Ms. Baird. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara all voting aye by roll-call.

Motion by Ms. Baird to recommend Article 2 for the Special Town Meeting - “Fund Unanticipated Employee Buyouts”; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Bruneau, Baird and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara all voting aye by roll-call.

The Select Board also had a lengthy discussion re STM Article 7 - the Petition regarding the Fire Dept traffic light. Fin Comm had already voted “no financial significance” as the Petition was written; however, apparently the Select Board is going to recommend a forward action that could cost the Town \$50k to solve the problem. Initially, the Town was told there were no options other than always blinking yellow or steady green with \$20k to change to steady green. Fire Chief Deering has suggested the Eastham option, with the lights off until needed. The Town’s advisor apparently said “no” but then “yes” or “maybe” - but that could cost \$50k to \$80k. Per Tom Daley/John Kelly, may be able to use funds from FY22 Vehicle & Equipment Stabilization to get started, and then from FY23 Fund starting 7/1 to complete the work - or add an Article to Fall Town Meeting to reimburse the Vehicle & Stabilization Fund.

Given this change in direction, with additional information, Fin Comm decided to re-vote STM Article 7:

Motion by Mr. Counihan to re-vote Article 7 for the Special Town Meeting - “Fire/Rescue Department Traffic Light Signal - by Petition”; second by Mr. Kanaga. The vote was 7-1 with Mmes. Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara voting aye and Ms. Baird voting nay - all by roll-call.

Motion by Mr. Athanassiou to recommend Article 7 for the Special Town Meeting - “Fire/Rescue Department Traffic Light Signal - by Petition”; second by Mr. Kanaga. The vote was 8-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara all voting aye by roll-call.

If appropriate, a Fin Comm letter will be drafted after Town Meeting re traffic light cost considerations.

Fin Comm Speakers/Talking Points for Town Meeting

-Articles 8-12 - Enterprise Funds – Ms. Bruneau

-Articles 13 and 14 and Fin Comm Letter to Warrant – Ms. Bruneau will speak to this. She asked John Kelly/Alan McClennen about what happens if the Betterment Bylaw fails; forwarded emails from both. Basically, the full cost of the sewer projects w/ go to taxpayers. Also it would be up to the Moderator whether the motion could be amended from the floor.

-Article 16 - 107 Main Street – Ms. Kremer & Mr. Counihan - “aye” and “nay” votes. Ms. Kremer noted that the 20 units are for affordable housing without any age restrictions (unlike other affordable housing in Town). Mr. Counihan feels that this project is not centrally located and noted the cost of construction is ts more per unit because it’s such a small development.

-Articles 18-22 - Betterment Bylaw and 4 MHP-related Articles. Ms. Bruneau brought up the question if the betterment bylaw failed and she was told this would then fall on the tax payers as noted above.

-Article 49 - Free Cash Transfer – Ms. Bruneau

-Article 62 - Charter Amendment / Quorum – Ms. Baird

Budget Review Reports with Focus on Findings and Recommendations and Follow-up

-**Beaches EF** - Budgeted to break even this year, non-inclusive of debt service (an additional \$631k to be paid by the General Fund - thus the taxpayers). The Beach EF has been receiving grants, these will be used to fund 25% of the new parking lot at Nauset Beach. Only one proposed fee increase - \$5 to replace a beach sticker.

-**Rock Harbor Boat Basin EF** - will operate at an \$78.7k loss (per the Warrant, subsidized by the General Fund). Debt service of \$633.7k not included (that to be paid by the General Fund). No fee increases. Budget includes some initial operating expenses related to possibility of introducing paid parking at Rock Harbor.

-**Transfer station EF** - will operate at a \$468k loss (thus subsidized by the General Fund) with an additional \$278k in debt service which will be covered by the General Fund. Residential, commercial and seasonal Transfer Station fees are proposed to go up from \$165 to \$185. Other fee increases proposed for second residential sticker (up from \$25 to \$35) and "subsequent" commercial sticker (from \$20 to \$35).

-**Moorings EF** - budgeted for just \$3,090 of direct expenses but almost \$160k in indirect expenses. FY21 revenue of \$131.6k from mooring permits and waitlist fees; FY23 revenue budget \$186k with resident mooring fee proposed to go up from \$120 to \$155. No debt.

-**Sewer Ops** - there are no salaries in this item, instead, contractor salaries included in direct expenses. Direct expenses of \$1.7mm for FY23, covered by Wastewater Stabilization Fund. Fees have been established for sewer usage (rate structure similar to water rates) and septage rates (for septage haulers).

-**Recreation Department** - discussion re confusing fee structure for residents and non-residents and for Adult Programs - and whether changes have been made to fees without Town Meeting approval. Ms. Bruneau will work w/ Ms. Kremer and Mr. Mahoney off-line to determine appropriate follow-up to Fin Comm questions about fee structure.

-**Buildings & Facilities** - still wonder why good-sized projects (eg, \$100k-sized projects such as the demolition of the seasonal housing on Beach Road in FY27) are not separate Warrant Articles (why drain the Building & Facilities budget?). Also - why other beach-related project are not in the Beaches EF budget (eg, septic system repairs at Skaket). Hoping to get clarity from Tom Daley. Also, lots of repairs in for OES, but some postponed until Fall Town Meeting.

-**Next meeting 5/19** - Water Dept, 3 schools; Fire; Police; Tax/Treasurer; Town Clerk and begin to summarize specific and general findings, recommends, follow-up

Fin Comm Focus/Priorities Going Forward

-**On May 6, 2022** - Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou will participate in a Zoom meeting with Susan Murray, Director of Nutrition for NRSD - also Katie Wibby, new CEO of the Lower Cape Outreach Council (LCOC) based here in Orleans. Added Ms. Wibby to the meeting because we've learned that the LCOC is going to provide funding for lunches for Truro Elementary. Shared info received last year from Eastham Town Administrator Jacqui Beebe about their "affordable living" programs.

-**Consider June/July/August Fin Comm meetings** - bring back Tim Counihan's discussion on property tax exemption strategy that provides revenue opportunity - consider inviting other thought leaders to that meeting

-**Continue to pursue other revenue ideas** - such as short-term rental tax impact fees; sale or lease of underutilized Town properties; etc.

-**5-year look-ahead worksheets**; long-term capital planning; other Town studies

General Updates Including Recent Select Board/Other Meetings

-Select Board Meeting 5/4/22 - voted on 4 shellfish grant applications; fee increases; Rock Harbor dockage agreement (w/in a family); 2 ambulance transport hardship waivers. Discussed Fire Dept traffic light as noted above. Voted on Town Meeting Articles as noted. Beer & Wine and outdoor entertainment license for Artist Cottages. Voted on draft letter to Eversource on landscaping for substation - focused on coordination strategy. Briefly discussed next steps on Nauset dredging - Eastham Town Meeting petition to not get in way of Orleans permitting was defeated at their TM this past Monday - so our Select Board will talk further/soon about our next steps - "checkpoint" on where we are, money spent, etc. Mathison suggested getting Eastham report from Center for Coastal Studies.

-Town Administrator's Update - grant received for Cove Rd stormwater - 75% of \$230k project; grant application with Eastham to Seaport Econ Council for \$162k (project \$\$202k) for Rock Harbor dredging design and permitting.

-Future agendas - Meff suggested inviting various studies/working groups to report to BOS; noted public likely confused by various studies; also noted lack of response to many recent surveys

Finance Committee Liaison Reports

-AHC on Tues, 5/3 - good session with Habitat reps; joint meeting with AHTB in June

-Sewer update from today - gravity sewer install complete; still working on force mains and pump stations; some work stopping at Mem Day; supply chain delays continue; schedule for Library landscaping - pre and post Mem Day/4th of July and into Fall w/ Trustee OK;

Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas

-Monday, 5/9/22 - Fin Comm at 5:30pm in NRMS Gymnasium; then TM at 6pm

-Thurs, 5/19/22 - TM post-mortem; Tom Finan - Fire/Rescue Feasibility Comm update; continue Fin Comm Budget Review discussions

-Thurs, 6/09/22 and 6/23/22 - regular June meetings

-Thurs, 7/14/22 and 7/28/22 - regular July meetings with year-end book-close voting on 7/14/22 and annual reorganization of Fin Comm (election of officers)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Faber, Recording Secretary

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

1. May 5, 2022 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft Fin Comm letter to Planning Direct George Meservey, et al re "Streetsense" Town of Orleans Economic Development Plan
3. Select Board Meeting Packet for the meeting of May 4, 2022 (Select Board website)
4. May 9, 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
5. John Kelly/Alan McClennen emails re potential impact if Betterment Bylaw fails at Town Meeting

6. Eastham Annual Town Meeting Warrant for May 2, 2022 (Eastham website)
7. Beaches Enterprise Fund Budget Review Write-up (Mahoney, Athanassiou, O'Meara)
8. Moorings EF Budget Review Write-up (Mahoney, Athanassiou, O'Meara)
9. Rock Harbor Boat Basin EF Budget Review (Mahoney, Athanassiou, O'Meara)
10. Transfer Station Budget Review (Mahoney, Athanassiou, O'Meara)
11. Sewer Operations Budget Review (Bruneau, Athanassiou, O'Meara)
12. Recreation Department Budget Review (Kremer, Mahoney)
13. Buildings & Facilities Budget Review (Bruneau, Athanassiou, O'Meara)

The minutes for the May 5, 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 R. Counihan, Clerk Finance Committee