



Town of Orleans

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Finance Committee Meeting

19 School Road Orleans Massachusetts 02653-3699

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 5, 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 at 7:00 pm in the Nauset Room by Finance Committee Chair Emerita Lynn Bruneau on behalf of Chairman Nick Athanassiou who was participating remotely. Also present and thus constituting a quorum were Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Constance Kremer, Tim Counihan and Peter O'Meara (the latter two participating remotely). Chris Kanaga, Ed Mahoney and Alisa Magnotta were absent.

Guests: Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Ops provided technical support.

Public Comment: None this evening

Announcements: NRSD Election on Tuesday, 1/10/23 at COA from 11am-7pm; 2 ballot questions - first is yes or no question on approval of the additional \$38.1M needed for the High School Building Project; second is critical - need a yes vote on this to allow for an override for the Orleans share of the project funding. If this part fails and the project goes ahead, the Orleans share of the cost w/go into the operating budget - swamping the operating budget.

-Property taxes due February 1 - you s/ have received your bill. Contact the Tax Collector's office in Town Hall if you have questions or can't find your bill.

-Important reminder in today's Chronicle - if you have a single-walled oil tank - an indoor one installed before July 1992 or an out-door one installed before July 2008 - the law requires replacement of these by March 1. Letters from Town informing property owners of this requirement. Contact Town Hall with questions.

-Citizens' Police Academy starts Monday, 1/16 and runs through March 13. Terrific opportunity to learn how things work at the OPD. Contact OPD to register.

Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

-Thurs, 9/14/22 minutes - Motion to approve by Ms. Baird, second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 6-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.

-Thurs, 11/9/22 minutes - Motion to approve by Mr. Counihan, second by Ms. Baird. The vote was 5-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou and Counihan all voting "aye" by roll-call. Mr. O'Meara abstained as he was absent from the 11/9/22 meeting.

-Thurs, 12/14/22 minutes - Motion to approve by Ms. Baird, second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 5-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou and Counihan all voting "aye" by roll-call. Mr. O'Meara abstained as he was absent from the 12/14/22 meeting.

-No draft minutes yet for 10/20/22, 11/3/22, 12/8/22 or 12/15/22. Ms. Bruneau and Ms. Kremer will work on these while we're waiting for a new Recording Secretary. Ad going out this weekend for a new secretary.

Review / Approval of Draft Fin Comm Report for the 2022 Annual Town Report

-Revised draft distributed at 4:30pm today w/ suggestions from Mr. Athanassiou that shortened the report to 4 pages. Earlier suggestion from Mr. Counihan incorporated as well - eliminating the reference to the Fin Comm letter in last May's letter to the Warrant (the debt and taxes discussion).
-The Committee agreed that the "stranded" sentence related to a commitment to more and better ways of communication was not needed in this year's letter - and that a new paragraph heading w/be needed for the section after Economic Vitality and Long-Term Capital Planning.
-Motion by Mr. Athanassiou to approve the Fin Comm Report for the 2022 Annual Town Report; second by Ms. Baird. The vote was 6-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.

Review / Approval of Draft Fin Comm Memo in Support of Fire-Rescue Department Plan to Apply for SAFER Grant for up to 8 Additional Firefighters/Paramedics

-First draft sent a day or two ago; revised draft at 4pm today w/ minor changes suggested by Chief Deering and by Mr. Athanassiou. As explained in the original cover note, Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou met w/ Chief Deering last Friday to discuss the topic - the possibility of Fin Comm support for the Fire Dept's plan to apply for a "SAFER" grant for up to 8 additional firefighters / paramedics - to show Fin Comm support for the Dept, for the grant application, and because we weren't seeing the Select Board stepping up to provide the "needed now" support. Thus the draft memo of support - outlining the issues.
-The "SAFER" grant is a federal grant sponsored by FEMA for "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" that is structured to cover firefighter/paramedic salaries and benefits for up to 3 years. At the end of the 3 years, the Town would pick up those costs and in the meantime would cover the cost of training, gear and admin costs (eg, physicals). Orleans would also have to provide bunk space for the new staff at an estimated cost of \$30k.
-At last night's Select Board meeting, after the Chief's quarterly report and the discussion w/ the 2 Chiefs re "regionalization" ideas, Ms. Bruneau spoke briefly w/ Chief Deering and shared a copy of the draft memo. The Select Board had again not stepped forward to support the need/application. Today the Chief provided a minor suggestion for the draft memo - the idea embraced at the end.
-Ms. Kremer noted the need for housing for any new hires as well as the risk of training more resources who might leave the Dept. for other towns. Ms. Bruneau noted that if Orleans is able to add additional staff, perhaps the Dept. will be able to relax its current 7-mile radius requirement (distance from the Station to home) which might help to ease the housing challenge. The current call-back system isn't working/practical. She noted that during last night's Select Board meeting, there was no mention of solutions or efforts to solve the workforce housing crisis (eg, for OFD, OPD, teachers, Town Hall workers). Ms. Kremer agreed, noting the concern expressed by both Chiefs.
-Ms. Bruneau noted the importance of supporting the grant initiative while at the same time working harder on interim housing solutions - we can't wait for Gov. Prence.
-Ms. Baird said that we are compounding the problem by adding to the tax base. But she also added that the Town's departments aren't talking to each other - OPD/OFD not talking to/with housing/Planning. She noted that by support this, we are "authorizing" the Town to spend an additional \$600k/year starting 3 years from now for new OFD resources.
-Mr. Counihan noted Ms. Baird's clarification re the impact on the Town budget. He also noted that the Select Board has been less than enthusiastic about this with a recent focus on regionalization. However, the OFD is already collaborating w/ other towns through "mutual aid". Would more/different "regionalization" solve this? Ms. Bruneau referred to the regionalization discussion at last night's Select Board meeting - noting that the OPD and OFD are already collaborating w/ other towns - some underway, some pending. Chief Deering said that Eastham has just received a grant to pursue shared equipment/vehicle maintenance - like Foxborough does (2 firefighters are also certified

mechanics). The Orleans DPW facility can accommodate fire trucks and ambulances for repair work, but right now there is no certified mechanic for such work.

-Other areas for collaboration might be training (already some) and inspections. Both Chiefs agreed that it is not practical to share resources right now - most Cape departments lack sufficient resources.

-Mr. Athanassiou noted that "mutual aid" is working. Likely regionalization s/ focus on back-room activities - on support functions. All Cape depts. need to staff up. Already have shared purchase agreements for medical supplies and ambulances. Chiefs already meet weekly (sub-regionally). Also, work in Hyannis is very different from that in Lower/Outer Cape towns so "regionalizing" would not be optimal use of resources. A region-wide study is needed to look at this. He also noted that OPD and OFD lose resources almost annually. Staffing up now would help to keep the pipeline filled - help to compensate for some of the attrition. Adding 8 more will take time; solving housing will take time.

-Mr. O'Meara believes that regionalization is working elsewhere in the country, but getting there is out of reach right now - we need to look at our immediate needs. Supporting the grant makes sense for a variety of reasons. We need to look at more/different housing options - eg, stipends, Town-owned housing - to support recruiting and retention. Ms. Bruneau agreed - noting that some housing projects like CC5/Pennrose, the Underground Mall and even 107 Main Street will likely help much sooner than Gov. Prence. There are also a number of small local conversions to add more housing but we also need to figure out how to get local workforce "first in line" for housing opportunities. Should there be more Town-owned condos?

-Ms. Kremer suggested incentivizing 2nd floor living build-out in Downtown as the sewers "go live". Agreement re the need for Town/Planning influence to help make this happen. Ms. Kremer also referred to the current Fire Station - unsafe occupancy - yet still no solution for location. Understaffing means significant impact on firefight daily lives, families. We s/be supporting the grant to help relieve this pressure.

-Mr. Athanassiou referred to Old Colony condos - costing \$300-350k. Why not buy 10 for \$3.5M (instead of wasting Town money on other things)? If the Town spends the money, the Town controls its use. If we use state/federal money, we have to play by their rules (eg, lotteries for housing). Ms. Bruneau agreed. Need to apply for the grant and meanwhile focus on/accelerate housing - more action/traction/faster solutions.

-Motion by Ms. Baird to approve the Fin Comm memo in Support of the Fire-Rescue Department Plan to Apply for a SAFER Grant for up to 8 Additional Firefighters/Paramedics; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 6-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.

-Ms. Baird suggested that we find ways to disseminate the information in this letter in addition to sending it to the Fire Chief and copying the Deputy Chief, the Select Board, the Interim Town Manager and the Finance Committee. Ms. Bruneau noted that it can be posted on the Fin Comm website and that she could send it to the Chronicle reporter who covers Orleans; however Mr. Athanassiou suggested starting w/ getting the letter to the Chief and all of the "cc's".

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

-Generally the same Liaison assignments? Or changes? Mr. Athanassiou noted some changes submitted by Ms. Magnotta - adding here to the COA review team as well as the Planning Dept. and ConsComm. He confirmed that this "add" includes monitoring regular meetings as well as participating in the Budget Review process for each of these Depts/groups. Mr. O'Meara agreed to cede his seat on the COA team and Ms. Kremer on ConsComm. Ms. Kremer will keep the Rec Dept. and add Energy/Climate Action. Mr. O'Meara will keep his DPW departments as well as the Town Clerk (with Ms. Bruneau) and the Board of Health (w/ Ms. Baird).

-The EF budgets are in the back of the Budget binders - separated out of DPW - the same as last year. Mr. Counihan, Mr. Mahoney and Ms. Bruneau will continue the Fin Comm "huddle" approach,

working together on the EF Budget Reviews. Mr. Counihan commented that the EF Budget Review meetings s/be with the “owners” of those “businesses” - which means Tom Daley and Nate Sears. Mr. Counihan will also continue w/ the CPC, the Library (w/ Ms. Baird) and MIS (w/ Ms. Bruneau). -Ms. Kremer asked if the EF debt service question had been answered. Ms. Bruneau said that we’ll find out when we see the Budgets - and when the EF Policy is updated (the latter likely in April). -Ms. Bruneau noted that Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner will be presenting the FY24 Budget and the FY25-29 CIP to the Select Board on 1/18. Likely not a joint meeting. Sumner will be participating remotely. Budget material to Mr. Athanassiou from Molly Bates next week for distribution. Likely once we get the FY24 Budget material we can begin to schedule our Budget Review meetings w/ the Dept Managers. -Ms. Bruneau commented on the new on-line financial reports - data is/was dated 12/21/22 but unclear if that is actually the date of the data - or is it November month-end or December month-end? Haven’t yet found detailed expense (appropriations) reports; haven’t yet found reports equivalent to what we used to get - or even easy-to-understand versions. Need a “tutorial” before we dive deeply into budget reviews. Need to be able to find useful financial info for our discussions. Mr, Athanassiou will contact Cathy Doane next week when she returns from vacation.

Updates

Update of Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions

-Wednes, 12/21/22 - this was John Kelly’s last meeting (he participated remotely). During Public Comment, Sarah Peake joined remotely and congratulated JK on his retirement. Ms. Bruneau and Mr. Athanassiou, both representing the Finance Committee, also spoke to congratulate Mr. Kelly on his retirement. Subsequently, Julian Cyr joined remotely and spoke briefly as well.

-Otherwise, a relatively uneventful, short meeting although a brief announcement re Brendan Guttman’s stepping up to keep things going in the Rec Dept. w/ the departure of Alan Harrison - making sure plans are in place for Rec programming over the holidays. Ms. Kremer noted that she had a follow-up call from the Collins Center (Rec Dept. Organization Study). Ms. Bruneau noted that the “read-out” of the Collins Ctr. report is due at the 1/18/23 Select Board meeting

-Wednes, 1/18/23 - OPD and OFD quarterly reports as referenced above; also the “regionalization” discussion w/ the Chiefs as referenced above.

-Select Board discussed/voted on salary range for the ad for the new Town Manager - \$190k-210k based in part on a study done by Rick White, the search consultant. Ms. Kremer asked if the Search Committee had met yet. Mr. Athanassiou (Fin Comm’s “ex officio” representative on that Committee) noted that Committee members had received an email today from Rick White, outlining “marching orders” on how he wants the effort to proceed. They will be meeting soon to organize. No resumes to look at yet.

-Also at the 1/4/23 meeting, Select Board voted to officially forward the Town Meeting vote on the Fertilizer Ban to the State Legislature. No discussion. Waited for the Legislature to come back after the holidays.

-Short-Term Rental Program - Select Board might bring this back at the Annual Town Meeting in May but likely simplified and more focused on a registration program without all the regulations. Also likely that this w/be a rental registration program - for all rentals - not just short-term, not just summer rentals. (Confirmed by Ms. Kremer and Ms. Baird.). Also some discussion at the meeting re the inconsistencies in various databases - BOH, Buildings, Assessor, Property Taxes, State data.

-Select Board talked about “merging” several Board/Committee-related Policies though no draft was offered. This will come back at a later meeting w/ a draft proposal.

-Community Center Feasibility Study was on the agenda but focus was more on how to combine those findings w/ potential findings/recommendations that may be coming from the Rec. Dept. Organization Study. How to combine and determine best “next steps”? One challenge - no building, no land. Also, Comm Ctr teams wants to keep going, but tasks named in their “charge” are completed (Ms. Reed).

-Town Manager's Report - Town notified that we're eligible for zero-interest funding for the MHP sewer project. What is "eligible"? Same as for Downtown. Very precise project management process w/ MA DEP. We are still "eligible" for zero interest loan for Downtown as we work through project milestones. MA DEP is involved all along the way. Once the project is completed to their satisfaction (meeting all criteria) and they sign off, then the loan terms are consummated. Same for MHP. Mr. Athanassiou noted that the betterment rate depends on the Town's borrowing rate for sewer funding. Zero interest w/be a good starting point.

-Separately - the Betterment Bylaw did get past the Legislature and signed by the Governor. Also the Town received \$330k in ARPA funding specifically for the MHP project - separate from earlier ARPA funding for the Town to be used for MHP-area Water Dept. projects passed at Town Mtg.

-Mr. Runyon brought up the Fire Station traffic light. Mr. Sumner will reach out to the abutters re the timeline for that project. And Mr. Herman referred to meeting w/ Boards/Committees about what they want championed at the Annual Town Meeting in May - and what housing Articles to support.

Liaison Reports as appropriate

-AHTB joint meeting w/ Select Board on 12/20 w/ discussion re Gov. Prence demolition. Cost estimate \$2M plus \$920k for additional haz/mat work (per today's Chronicle). Demo cost c/be paid directly by the Town - or indirectly, through a developer (possibly lower cost that way). No further discussion about this since then at Select Board meetings. Ms. Kremer noted that the Chronicle article referred to potential grant funding that might cover the haz/mat costs. Original cost of the property was approx. \$2.9M. No pre-purchase study was done. Why not just sell the property!

-BOWSC before Christmas - WWTF contractor working through punch-list and transition to Veolia and training septage haulers.

-CPC - 19 applications for FY24 funding totaling \$4.7M but CPC has just over \$1M to "spend" in support of these applications/projects. Ms. Bruneau will send the list from the CPC website. Largest "asks" include \$500k for AHTB; \$100k for Wellfleet affordable housing project; \$267k for wetlands land purchase at foot of Tonset; \$440k for accessible walkway at Village Green/Library; \$422k for Vets Park project work; \$2.4M for 44 Main Street/Old Fire House project; \$122k for Odd Fellows Hall/Northwest Schoolhouse repairs and new kitchen; and \$230k for Academy Playhouse exterior work. Some discussion about the "Northwest Schoolhouse" - what is it and who uses it.

Other general updates

-Y/E 6/30/22 Audit Report and Q&A follow-up forwarded by Mr. Athanassiou. Some changes will be made to the Audit Report based on Fin Comm's observations.

-CDoane Q&A from EFs and earlier Financial Plan /other Financial Qs - Ms. Bruneau suggested addressing these/rolling them into the Budget Review process.

-Select Board goals are finally posted on the Select Board website; maybe look at these to see if Fin Comm is on the same wavelength.

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

-Thurs, 1/19/23 - Fin Comm meeting; preliminary review of FY24 Budget material

-Thurs, 1/26/23 - Fin Comm meeting; Library Board of Trustees - leverage Feb'22 budget review write-up for discussion topics

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

-Mr. Athanassiou sent an updated schedule - including Library to Fin Comm on 1/26.

-Consider Scott Walker for bond model demo from last year's CPC meeting; also CPC re their financials

-AHC/AHTB for financials and housing "next steps"

-Ms. Bruneau noted that CRC may discuss reintroducing Article 26 - responsibility for appointments (eg, who appoints the Finance Director) at their next CRC meeting

-Ms. Kremer suggested meeting w/ Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner. Mr. Athanassiou met w/ him for a couple of hours before Christmas (prior acquaintances). Sumner is aware of some of Fin

Comm's challenges. Ms. Kremer noted that she had been impressed w/ Mr. Sumner's accomplishments when he was the Town Manager in Brewster. How much influence will he have on the Select Board in his role as Interim TM?

Adjourn - Motion to adjourn by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 6-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Kremer and Lynn Bruneau

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

1. January 5, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft minutes for the 9/14/22 Finance Committee meeting
3. Draft minutes for the 11/9/22 Finance Committee meeting
4. Draft minutes for the 12/14/22 Finance Committee meeting
5. Draft Fin Comm Report for the 2022 Annual Town Report
6. Draft Fin Comm Memo in Support of the Fire-Rescue Department Plan to Apply for a SAFER Grant for up to 8 Additional Firefighters/Paramedics
7. Updated Fin Comm Liaison Assignments for Budget Reviews
8. Select Board Meeting Packets for the 12/21/22 and the 1/4/23 Select Board meetings (Select Board website)

The minutes for the January 5, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the January 26, 2023 meeting. **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 absent from the January 5 meeting.**