



Town of Orleans
Finance Committee
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ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 23, 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 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 Chair Emerita Lynn Bruneau. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Vice Chairman Chris Kanaga, Committee Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Constance Kremer (who joined the meeting at 6:55pm), Tim Counihan, Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara (participating remotely). Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou and Alissa Magnotta were absent.

Guests: Meff Runyon, Select Board member and Liaison to the Finance Committee, and Tom Daley, DPW and Natural Resources Director. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

(00:00) Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

(00:10) Announcements:

Ms. Bruneau noted that the public is invited to tour the new modular classrooms/school buildings at the High School with one more opportunity - next Thursday, March 30 between 4 and 6pm. Mr. Counihan took the opportunity to tour the buildings last week and found it very interesting. The tours are given by the students.

(2:20) Review/Approval of Transfer Station Reserve Fund Transfer Request for Transfer Station Trailer(s)

DPW Director Tom Daley provided a brief history re the Transfer Station Trailers: 9 years ago, the trailers were added to the CIP, to be replaced on a cycle basis. Four years ago, a \$10,000 repair was necessary that caused his department to reflect on the trailer replacement process. In 2021, a trailer was replaced at a cost of \$66,000; in 2022, a second trailer was replaced at a cost of \$80,000. The lowest bid received for the trailer in 2023 came in at \$106,984 with just a single bidder who will hold the bid price for the next few weeks.

Mr. Daley noted that he has about \$90k readily available in the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund but would need Town Meeting approval to transfer further funds from the Transfer Station Fund Balance for operating expenses. Thus he is requesting a \$17k transfer from the Fin Comm Reserve Fund so that he can proceed with the purchase of the new trailer (for just under \$107k). The plan would be to request a reimbursement of this \$17k to the Fin Comm Reserve Fund from the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Budgeted Surplus Account at Town Meeting in May.

Mr. Mahoney asked for clarification re where the money would be transferred from. Mr. Daley said that the money will be borrowed initially from the Fin Comm Reserve Fund, and then refunded

at Special Town Meeting by transferring money from the Transfer Station Budgeted Surplus back to the Fin Comm Reserve Fund.

Motion by Mr. Counihan to approve the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Reserve Fund Transfer Request for Transfer Station Trailer(s) in the amount of \$17,000; second by Ms. Baird. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. O'Meara, Mahoney, Counihan, and Kanaga all voting "aye" by roll call.

Ms. Bruneau will add the Fin Comm vote information to the signed form and leave it in the Town Hall Drop Box for Greta Avery in the Finance Department office.

(8:45) Review/Approval of Finance Committee meeting minutes – 3/15/23, 3/16/23

- **3/15/23** – Mr. Counihan moved to approve the minutes of the 3/15/23 Fin Comm meeting as drafted; Ms. Baird seconded. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. O'Meara, Mahoney, Counihan and Kanaga all voting "aye" by roll call.
- **3/16/23** – Mr. Counihan moved to approve the minutes of the 3/16/23 Fin Comm meeting as drafted; Ms. Baird seconded. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. O'Meara, Mahoney, Counihan and Kanaga all voting "aye" by roll call.

(10:00) Continue Discussion on Fin Comm Town Meeting "FY24 Annual Letter"

Ms. Bruneau reviewed the current/updated draft letter and the sections it includes. She discussed strategic planning and recent/on-going town studies, noting that such studies should include recommendations for funding and accountabilities. There was discussion on strategic planning, and how different Town plans should work together. Mr. Counihan noted that there were a few plans/studies that he was unfamiliar with (eg, the Eldredge Park Way athletic fields study currently underway). He suggested a way to structure the Comprehensive Plan/strategic planning section of the letter that might address disparate viewpoints.

Fin Comm discussed the Financing/Financial Planning section and the intent or objective of the message in that section. Ms. Baird asked Mr. Runyon if the Select Board's goal was to make "Orleans an affordable community for all demographic cohorts." Mr. Runyon said yes, but noted that the question is the definition of "affordable".

Mr. Counihan discussed customer service and leadership from Town Hall and staff, as well as accountability.

In discussing affordable housing, Mr. O'Meara considered resident v. non-resident, noting that both are members of the Orleans community and that the true issue is income levels. There was further discussion.

(40:00) Review/Continue Discussion of Fin Comm FY24 Budget Reviews/Further Observations from 3/15/23 Joint Select Board/FinComm Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget

Ms. Bruneau noted that two more Fin Comm budget review write-ups had been distributed this week (Council on Aging and Conservation Department). Once all write-ups are "standardized", they will be posted to the Fin Comm website.

She then reviewed the most recent approved budget changes, as voted on by the Select Board at yesterday's Select Board meeting (3/22/23). The key actions included moving the Recreation Reorganization costs out of an override, to be funded as part of the budget adjustments. The Cape Tech budget has increased, due to enrollment, and will go to an override. The Nauset Regional budget will also go to an override.

(1:15:00 Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas including others to invite for updates:

- March 30: Fin Comm agreed to postpone the planned meeting w/ C.Sumner/C.Doane on 3/30 until April and concentrate instead on Warrant Article voting. Ms. Bruneau will contact Sumner/Doane. Also review Fin Comm Warrant Letter.
- Tuesday, April 4: another Fin Comm meeting to be added to vote on Warrant Articles, will be cancelled if unnecessary; start time 6:45pm
- April 6: Complete voting on Warrant Articles; finalize Fin Comm FY24 Annual Letter
- April 20 and 27: Citizen Forum meets in the Nauset Room from 5 to 6:30pm; Fin Comm meetings will begin at 6:45 or 7pm those nights.
- Also in April: Ms. Bruneau will contact the sewer project consultants and others as appropriate to book an appearance at a Fin Comm meeting in April to ensure Fin Comm understands all the sewer-related Articles on the Warrant

(1:20:00) Review results of OES, Nauset Regional School District, and Cape Tech FY24 Budget Observations from the 3/22/23 Select Board/FinComm Joint Meeting

Ms. Bruneau reviewed the meeting with the 3 Schools; questions that the FinComm asked of the Schools will be posted on the Fin Comm website. There will be overrides for the Cape Tech and NRSRD school budgets for the Town Meeting warrant and ballot.

(1:25:00) May 2023 TM "Warrant Watch": Discussion of Warrant Articles based on the current Warrant Index/possible invitations to others for updates

Ms. Bruneau noted that the draft Warrant is near completion, and that Fin Comm received its first draft this afternoon; however, voting was not listed on the Fin Comm agenda for tonight's meeting - thus Fin Comm will wait until 3/30/23 to begin voting. The Select Board voted to "place" most of the remaining Articles and then voted to "approve" most of them as well at their meeting yesterday (3/22/23). A couple Articles were pulled from the Warrant Index - perhaps until Fall Town Meeting.

The Enterprise Fund budgets will likely change in the next few days as Indirect Expenses are recalculated. New money/other changes: \$275,000 for the downtown sewer project; additional funding for Meetinghouse pond. Gavigan cottages - design money postponed while the Select Board reconsiders strategy for this valuable real estate (ie, why lifeguard housing for 10-12 wks/yr on prime beachfront real estate?).

Veteran's Memorial Park - some funding from CPC; further funding from Town with more anticipated through private donations. Pilgrim Lake Fish Ladder - The Summary in the draft Warrant helps to clarify the purpose of the Fish Ladder. Ms. Kremer discussed the importance of the Herring Run and the need to maintain the Fish Ladder. Mr. Runyon said that this is contingent on receiving a grant.

In general discussion about the Warrant, Mr. Runyon said that the Free Cash Policy is for one-time uses (eg, for specific purchases or projects) while overrides will cover needs over time (eg, increases in salaries). There was further discussion about the school budgets.

Ms. Bruneau suggested that Fin Comm consider having an additional meeting to vote on Warrant Articles, prior to the April 7 go-to-press date. Fin Comm agreed to an extra meeting if/as needed as well as utilizing time on March 30 most efficiently to vote on the Articles. A meeting will be added on Tuesday, April 4 at 6:45pm. The Thursday, April 6 Fin Comm meeting will still be used for final Warrant Article voting as well as final approval of the Fin Comm Annual Letter to the Town. At the March 30 meeting, if the extra in-between meeting not needed, it can be cancelled.

(1:35:00) Updates

Update of Select Board Meeting discussions/decisions

Most of the Select Board agenda was covered during previous discussions in the meeting.

(1:35:00) Liaison Reports as appropriate

- Ms. Bruneau reviewed the BOWSC meeting, noting progress on the Sewer project with the “first flush” scheduled for the week of March 27. The tentative date for the dedication ceremony is Monday, May 4.
- She also noted that the Affordable Housing Trust Board met together with the Select Board to review housing-related Warrant Articles. The two Boards decided to pull the draft Warrant Article related to the demolition of the Gov. Prence buildings (\$2M). An Article will ask to convey the properties for housing - to set things up for issuing an RFP for the development of the properties for housing. The Town will continue to pursue a state grant for funding the removal of hazardous materials from the site.
- Ms. Baird noted that the Council on Aging will have to separate its water line (fire from residential), and that the Water Department will do the work on that project although the COA or the Town will have to pay for the materials. She further discussed social service issues that the town is confronting with regard to housing, SNAP benefits, MassHealth and other areas. Ms. Baird also said that there was a suggestion of creating a social media policy for the Town, and to also look at a policy on how donated funds are expended. Town Counsel Mike Ford has advised the COA that unless a donor specifically says how the donation should be funded, then the Town can make that determination. Donations given to Town departments/agencies are monies given to the Town unless the donation is specifically ear-marked (restricted) for specific purpose(s).
- Ms. Kremer was pleased that Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner’s Recreation Department reorganization recommendations were approved.

Other general Updates

- Ms. Bruneau referred to an article in today’s Provincetown Independent re Wellfleet and their financial auditors - the same firm used the Orleans. She noted that Fin Comm had researched the topic a year ago (January 2022) and confirmed that the Orleans 3-year contract with this firm apparently is for FY21-FY23. She will ask Mr. Sumner if the Town is considering putting it out to bid in the future.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Baird and seconded by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, and Kremer and Messrs. O'Meara, Counihan, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting "aye" by roll call. The meeting adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. March 23, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Finance Committee Reserve Fund Transfer Request for \$17k from the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund (Trash Trailer)
3. Draft March 15, 2023 Finance Committee meeting minutes
4. Draft March 16, 2023 Finance Committee meeting minutes
5. Fin Comm Q&A re the FY24 Budget Reviews w/ OES, Cape Tech and NRSD (all now posted to the Fin Comm website)
6. FY24 Budget Materials for OES, Cape Tech and NRSD
7. Draft Fin Comm "FY24 Annual Letter"
8. Fin Comm Budget Reviews for the Council on Aging and the Conservation Department
9. Updated Draft Warrant Article Index
10. Draft Warrant Articles for Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting

The minutes for the March 23, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the March 30, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 8-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Messrs. Counihan, Kanaga, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call. Mr. Athanassiou abstained as he was absent from the March 30 meeting.**