



# Town of Orleans

## Finance Committee

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ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

*Justin Athanassiou*  
23 MAY 5 11:27 AM

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 27, 2023 – 7:00 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 7:00 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Committee Vice Chair Chris Kanaga, Committee Clerk Elaine Baird, and Committee members Lynn Bruneau and Constance Kremer. Ed Mahoney and Alisa Magnotta participated remotely. Tim Counihan and Peter O'Meara were absent.

**Guests:** Select Board Liaison Meff Runyon; BOWSC Chairman Alan McClennen and AECOM representatives Tom Parece and Tim Harrison (the latter participating remotely). Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

#### **(0:15) Public Comment:**

There were no public comments.

#### **(00:30) Announcements:**

Ms. Bruneau reviewed a number of announcements:

-A reminder from the Tax Collector's office that Real Estate and Personal Property tax bills are due on May 1. Copies of invoices may be found online or through the Tax Collector's Office.

-The Sticker Office (at the DPW Facility at 40 Giddiah Hill Road) will be open the first week in May, through the Friday before Labor Day. The hours will be Monday – Friday 9AM to 1PM. Stickers may also be purchased online.

-The Water Department's annual hydrant flushing program has begun and will continue through the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of May. Signs are posted in areas where flushing will take place.

-The Annual Town Election is Tuesday, May 16 with voting to take place at the Senior Center. The voter registration deadline is April 28 and voting by mail is an option through the Town Clerk's office.

-Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 8 beginning at 6pm at the Middle School Gymnasium. Child care will be provided w/ registration information posted on the Town website.

#### **(4:00) Meet with AECOM/Others for Sewer Project/Planning Update in anticipation of May Town Meeting**

Mr. Athanassiou introduced Tom Parece and Tim Harrison from AECOM. Allan McClennen, Chairman of the Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners, was also present. Mr. Parece gave a presentation (subsequently forward to Fin Comm and posted to the Fin Comm Drop Box) which provided a brief history of the Town's wastewater planning process, the primary watersheds and nitrogen removal requirements and then an outline of the first 3 phases of the sewer projects:

- Phase 1 - Downtown - recently completed with property owners now making arrangements to connect to the sewer line; septage haulers have been hauling septage to the new Wastewater Treatment Facility for about 5 weeks with associated revenue now coming in

- Phase 2 - Meetinghouse Pond - primary funding approved a year ago at May 2022 Town Meeting; final paperwork to DEP this summer to SRF approval; construction to begin in the fall (through 2025)
- Phase 3 - "Lakes and Ponds" phase focused on the area around Crystal and Pilgrim Lakes; initial funding at May 2023 Town Meeting for design and project management (Article 16); construction w/be 2026-2026.

Additional "slides" showed the "financial timeline" with funding for each of the phases at Town Meetings beginning in 2018. A "bar chart" showed the contributions to project costs from the short-term rental tax, the 6% hotel-motel tax, the Cape & Islands Water Protection Fund and betterment fees. Property owner costs were discussed - with a reference to the information included in the "Sewer System FAQs" posted on the Town website. It has been suggested that property owner costs be detailed separately in a more easily accessible document on the website.

Property owners in sewerred areas should consider budgeting for the following services and fees associated with connection in addition to annual user charges and sewer assessment betterments:

- Connection Permit (currently set at \$0.50/gal of average daily water use or \$250, whichever is greater);
- Board of Health Septic System Abandonment Permit (\$75);
- Engineering including plans, specifications, and permit application (on the order of \$2,000 - \$10,000); and
- Construction including all costs to connect the property waste line to the sewer service stub (including low-pressure pump systems if necessary), decommissioning the existing sewage disposal system, and restoration of property (on the order of \$5,000 - \$30,000).

Articles 17 and 18 at the May Town Meeting aim to fund additional costs for Phase 1 (final project costs for the Downtown area) and Phase 2 (additional project costs for the Meetinghouse Pond area pending Friday's bid opening. If the bids come in under the estimate, then Article 18 can be amended or "indefinitely postponed").

Mr. Parece also discussed how the Sewer Betterment Assessment is calculated, saying that the cost attributable to one (1) sewer unit is calculated by dividing the total cost of the wastewater system to be paid by Sewer Betterment Assessments by the total number of sewer units in that sewer service area. The Sewer Betterment Assessment for each property is then calculated by multiplying the cost of one (1) sewer unit by the number of sewer units assigned to the property.

Mr. Athanassiou thanked the AECOM representatives and Mr. McClennen for their participation in tonight's Fin Comm meeting. It was noted that Mr. Parece will be retiring at the end of May and all wished him well in his retirement. Mr. Harrison will become the lead AECOM project engineer following Mr. Parece's retirement.

**(1:18:00) Review / Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 4/20/23**

- **4/20/23** – Ms. Baird moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Mr. Kanaga seconded the motion. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting "aye" by roll-call.

**(1:20:00) Consider FinComm TM Warrant Article Discussion Points; Re-Vote Any Warrant Articles as/if appropriate; finalize talking assignments for May TM**

Ms. Bruneau reviewed the circumstances related to public hearings for 3 of the Enterprise Funds that have fee changes proposed in Warrant Articles for Town Meeting. Mr. Counihan raised the question which was then pursued with Town Hall. The Transfer Station is under the oversight of the Board of Health and a Public Hearing was held on April 20, 2023 re the proposed fee changes for the Transfer Station fee change with the changes presented by DPW Director Tom Daley. However, to date, there have been no public hearings for fee changes proposed for the Beaches and Sewer Operations. Ms. Bruneau noted that she understands that the required public hearing has been scheduled for Monday, May 8 at 5:30pm - immediately before Town Meeting.

Ms. Bruneau outlined further updates to a number of Warrant Articles, including the Sewer EF budget, the Rental Registration Bylaw (a Q&A page will be distributed at Town Meeting) and the Housing Articles (another hand-out for Town Meeting). There was a lengthy discussion among Fin Comm members about the Rental Registration Bylaw. Ms. Baird and Mr. Athanassiou will follow up with Select Board Chair Andrea Reed to note Fin Comm's concerns/questions regarding the Article as currently written.

Fin Comm "talking point" roles will be as follows, with some members offering a pro/con stance:

- At the start of "Special Town Mtg" - Nick Athanassiou to briefly frame Fin Comm's input
- Special Town Meeting Article #3: Fund Free Cash Transfer – Lynn Bruneau
- Articles #8 – 12: Enterprise Funds – Tim Counihan
- Articles #13 and #14 - Fund Town/School Budget FY24 and CIP FY25-FY29 – Nick Athanassiou
- Articles #16, 17, 18: CWRMP related – Lynn Bruneau
- Articles #21, 41, 43, 49: Fire/Emergency Related – Lynn Bruneau
- Articles #31, 32, 60, 62, 63, 64: Housing Related – Constance Kremer
- Article # 53: Rental Regis Bylaw – Elaine Baird/Nick Athanassiou (con/pro)
- Article #56: Gov. Prence Conveyance Authorization – Ed Mahoney (con), Nick Athanassiou (pro)

### **(1:49) Review/Approval of Any Reserve Fund Transfer Requests If/As Needed**

Ms. Bruneau noted that she had reviewed Fin Comm's monthly appropriations report detail and the average run-rate for secretarial costs per meeting. If Fin Comm transfers the small amount in the Fin Comm "gift fund" plus the unspent Committee "Expense" balance to the Fin Comm "Salaries" account, we may have enough to get through the fiscal year without having to organize a Reserve Fund Transfer.

### **(1:51:00) Updates**

Update of Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions - no Select Board meeting this week

Update on Orleans Citizens' Forum "Candidates' Night" discussion

Mr. Athanassiou said there were only half a dozen or so in attendance at the Forum and another 5-6 watching on Zoom. No way to tell how many might have been watching on Channel 18. Both Select Board Candidates (Reed and Runyon) presented brief summaries of their backgrounds and their interests in running for an additional term. The meeting was taped and can be watched on the Town website.

Liaison Reports as appropriate

Ms. Bruneau reported OES School Committee meeting. The Committee voted to opt out of "School Choice". Per Fin Comm discussion, OES hasn't participated in "School Choice" in 10+ years or more. Also - a school can determine specifically how to participate - which grades and how many students per grade.

Ms. Bruneau also noted that NRSD Superintendent Brooke Clenchy delivered prepared remarks on the District's concerns about student use of phones/electronic devices and the risk of making threats or perceived threats - all of which are taken completely seriously these days, given the nationwide increase in threat-related incidents. Superintendent Clenchy noted that the police must be notified and the FBI must be notified. Nothing is considered a "prank" any more. This applies to elementary school children as well as high school students (and faculty and staff).

Separately, Ms. Bruneau referred briefly to this week's Planning Board meeting and to the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee meeting. Re the latter, she suggested that a few Fin Comm members might meet w/ Veolia representatives (the Wastewater Treatment Facility operations consultants) to review the WWTF operations report to ensure a good understanding of the report details.

Other General Updates - none this evening

**(2:01:00) Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas**

- May 4: 7pm – Agree on TM Warrant Article Discussion Points
- May 8: 5:30pm – Final Voting on TM Warrant Articles Prior to Town Meeting
- May 18: 6:15pm – Town Meeting "post mortem"; agree on Fin Comm reply to Planning Board request

**Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn by Ms. Baird; Mr. Kanaga seconded the motion. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau, Kremer and Magnotta and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting "aye" by roll-call. The meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. April 27, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. AECOM Wastewater Project Presentation
3. Sewer System FAQs
4. Draft April 20, 2023 FinComm Meeting Minutes
5. Warrant for the May 2023 Town Meeting and Updated Warrant Index
6. Rental Registration Q&A for Town Meeting May 8, 2023
7. Orleans Housing Story - May 2023 (Town Meeting Hand-Out)
8. Select Board meeting packet for the 4/26/23 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)
9. Wastewater Treatment Facility - March 2023 Operations Report (Veolia)

The minutes for the April 27, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the May 4, 2023 Fin Comm meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. 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.**