



**Town of Orleans**  
Finance Committee  
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'23 AUG 11 10:33AM  
Jennifer Hiji  
ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

**MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, June 1, 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 Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Lynn Bruneau, Tim Counihan, Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara (who participated remotely). Alisa Magnotta, Constance Kremer and Chris Kanaga were absent.

**Guests:** 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 announced the Orleans Citizens Forum Annual Meeting, with guest speakers from the *Provincetown Independent* (the editor and publisher), to be held at the Center for Culture and History on June 22 from 5-7 PM.

Ms. Bruneau also announced that wastewater/sewer materials on the Town website continue to be updated regularly. Also, arrangements could be made for consultants from AECOM to meet with street associations at their summer annual meetings to answer any questions regarding sewer project planning, particularly for the Meetinghouse Pond area of the "Lakes and Ponds" area.

Mr. Athanassiou noted that Fin Comm was thanked by the Library Board for input and support and that the Library/Board is hoping to submit their application for project funding to the State in the fall.

**(5:30) Review / Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 5/4/23 and 5/8/23**

- 5/4/23 – Ms. Baird moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Mr. Counihan seconded. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye", by roll-call.
- 5/8/23 – Mr. Counihan moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Ms. Baird seconded. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye", by roll-call.

**(6:30) Review/Approval of Any Reserve Fund Transfer Requests If/As Needed**

Mr. Athanassiou noted that there were no Reserve Fund transfer requests pending approval; however, there is one in the pipeline.

Ms. Bruneau noted that Fin Comm will likely need to transfer funds from the Fin Comm Expense budget to the Fin Comm Salaries budget before 6/30/23 year-end in order to cover the May/June Recording Secretary costs. Based on input from Cathy Doane, Fin Comm can also close out the less

than \$70 in a Fin Comm Gift Account. Mr. Athanassiou will follow up with the Finance Department to confirm the process required to make all of this happen.

**(3:00) Review and vote to approve Finance Director's Special Year-End Request for Amendment to Budget – re Finance Dept. expenses related to new Town Accountant space needs.**

**Ms. Baird moved to approve the Finance Director's Special Year-End Request; Mr. Counihan seconded the motion.**

Fin Comm discussed the request for new furniture being purchased for the new Town Accountant, and other expenses covered in this request. There was further discussion of the office moves that will take place, and physical security for the Treasurer's Office. The Select Board had approved the request the evening before with no questions. Several in Fin Comm felt there was no choice other than to approve the request.

**The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.** Mr. Athanassiou will sign and submit the paperwork to the Finance Department as required.

**(15:00) Annual Town Meeting 2023 "post mortem" including Fin Comm Budget Review process, review of Warrant Articles, Town Meeting participation, Select Board considerations**

Ms. Bruneau noted that almost all of the Fin Comm "talking points" from Town Meeting are on the Fin Comm website, with standardized headings and fonts and file names. Still "tbd" - Mr. Athanassiou's comments related to Article 53 - Convey the Gov. Prence Properties - that followed Mr. Mahoney's remarks.

Ms. Bruneau also noted that in the Select Board discussion re Town Meeting, Mr. Runyon commented that Fin Comm's discussion of Warrant Articles by topic, rather than by funding source, was very helpful.

Mr. Mahoney said that the Warrant could be reorganized, to keep similar/related Articles together. Mr. Athanassiou further discussed the process re how the Warrant is compiled. Fin Comm is looking forward to working with the new Town Manager in establishing new Budget and Warrant development processes.

Mr. Athanassiou also discussed having a presence of either the Select Board, or Town Administration, at Fin Comm meetings during budget season to encourage timely communication. There was further discussion of the positive ways in which Town Meeting went for both Fin Comm and for those voters who took the time to learn about the Articles and supporting materials.

Mr. Athanassiou and other Fin Comm members discussed Enterprise Funds and the need for managing those funds - those enterprises - from beginning to end. Ms. Bruneau, Mr. Counihan and Mr. Mahoney met with Veolia (the Sewer Operations consultants responsible for operating the sewer collection system and the new Wastewater Treatment Facility) to better understand Veolia's role and the link between their operations reports and the Town's sewer-related financial reports. Another meeting will be scheduled for mid-July to further the discussion, with DPW Director Tom Daley included, to further probe the Enterprise Fund roles vs. sewer operations.

Mr. Mahoney discussed how Fin Comm presents information at Town Meeting, and noted that in his opinion, advocacy is not part of Fin Comm's charge. He felt that FinComm should focus specifically on financial analysis and identifying financial implications for the taxpayers. Ms. Bruneau read Fin Comm's responsibilities from the Charter, which some Fin Comm members interpreted more broadly than Mr. Mahoney. There was further discussion on how the Fin Comm presents its findings and opinions at Town Meeting and through other communications.

Mr. O'Meara noted that some of the Town's expenditures have a social impact, such as the early childhood education, which also deserves to be discussed.

**(57:00) Discussion re Proposed "Grouping" of Fin Comm Liaison Assignments for FY24 and Review of Fin Comm Liaison Role**

Mr. Athanassiou discussed Liaison Assignments, and their roles. He had distributed several versions of the material, sorted by "grouping", etc. Ms. Bruneau asked about the role of the Fin Comm liaison and how often they should attend meetings. There are 40+ Boards/Committees, and 9 members of Fin Comm to be liaison to all of them (or perhaps not all of them). Mr. Athanassiou noted that some are less time consuming than others. Ms. Bruneau noted that Liaison Reports often get skipped during budget season. Mr. Athanassiou commented on the time it takes to attend the committee meetings. The conversation will be continued at a future meeting with any interim feedback directed to Mr. Athanassiou. The Fin Comm-defined "Liaison Role" will be distributed for feedback prior to the next meeting.

**(1:10:00) Discussion re Planning Board Request for Fin Comm Input re Updating of 2006 Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Athanassiou noted that Planning Director George Meservey has requested Fin Comm input on part of the "Community Facilities and Services" section of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the Plan is structured in Goals that lead to Policies. Fin Comm agreed that the Policies as presented were not action-oriented.

Mr. Counihan discussed the asset list, and facility maintenance, which need to be included. Ms. Bruneau noted that the Town Charter already assigns the responsibility for an annual inventory of Town assets to the Town Manager. Others noted that likely there is a comprehensive list of Town assets for tax/audit purposes.

Mr. Counihan felt that the Town should be proactive when looking at development, and partner with people who want to do development in Town. There was further discussion about the Town's role in private development – both for community use and private use/homes. It isn't clear whether the Comprehensive Plan refers to/includes private development.

Mr. Athanassiou, going back to the Comprehensive Plan, discussed other possible options when discussing zoning and development. Mr. Counihan suggested "the Town will allow certain uses through zoning restrictions and permissible uses," and the Town taking a position in what it will and won't allow to be developed. However, Ms. Bruneau suggested that in structuring sentences, there is a risk in "leading with a chin" related to zoning - a risk that encouraging zoning to control development will look like the Town is trying to curb rather than encourage development.

Mr. Athanassiou will take Fin Comm comments from tonight's discussion and incorporate them into a document for submission to the Planning Board for the Comprehensive Plan initiative.

**(1:32:00) Updates**

**Updates re Recent Select Board Meeting discussions / decisions**

Mr. Athanassiou discussed the May 31 Select Board meeting, noting the sun-setting of 6 Ad-Hoc committees/task forces, including the Charter Review Committee, the Community Building Renovation (44 Main St.) Committee, Community Center Feasibility Study Committee and Gov. Prence Committee. Although some concern was expressed re the dissolution of the 44 Main Street Committee, Mr. Sumner had included suggested “next steps” in his report related to the Recreation Department.

Ms. Bruneau noted Mr. Sumner’s report on the Recreation Department and the proposed plan for transition leadership, with COA Director Judi Wilson stepping in to help guide Recreation programming into and through the summer months. On-line registration for summer registration is available and Mr. Sumner is also working on minor pay adjustments for several key positions. At the COA, the Assistant Director will assume the leadership role while Ms. Wilson is more focused on Recreation this summer. The COA Board is concerned but supportive.

Ms. Bruneau also recapped Mr. Sumner’s discussion on the Rental Registration Bylaw, which has been sent to the Attorney General for a 90-day review period. The proposed start date is January 1, 2024 with an online registration likely beginning 3 months before January 1. The Bylaw is registration only. It isn’t clear how any additional “regulations” would be added.

Other brief updates were provided re the May 10 and May 17 Select Board meetings.

**(1:43:00) Other general updates including NRSD Budget Revisions and OES Asset/Accessibility Report**

Mr. Athanassiou noted that the NRSD revised their budget to make up for the shortfall, which will be covered by the District’s Excess and Deficiency (E&D) fund (school version of “free cash”). Ms. Bruneau said that the Select Board did not take any action on the matter, but reiterated the importance of keeping a closer eye on the budget moving forward. Key factors in the “overrun” included additional costs related to transportation, Special Ed costs, and school choice/charter school tuition.

Ms. Bruneau discussed the OES Asset/Accessibility Report timeline. The draft report went to subcommittee for review on 5/31 with feedback to the consultant by June 2. The final report will go to the School Committee on/by 6/8 with a public meeting about the Report scheduled for 6/15 at 3:30pm in the Skaket Room. Mr. Athanassiou reiterated the need for a firm capital plan for the schools; there was further discussion, including awareness that Brewster has 1 of their 2 elementary schools in a similar situation, and some speculation as to how a District-wide discussion/decision about the elementary schools might take place - particularly in light of declining enrollments, District-wide.

**(1:54:00) Liaison Reports as appropriate**

Ms. Bruneau provided brief updates from a number of recent Board/Committee meetings: OES (5/15); Affordable Housing Trust Board (5/16); Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners (5/17); and the Planning Board (5/23). She was out of town for the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee meeting on 5/25. As noted above, she and Mr. Coughlin and Mr. Mahoney had met with Veolia representatives on 5/22 to discuss Sewer Operations and reporting. A tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant could be organized for Fin Comm members who have not yet toured the plant.

**(1:59:00) Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas**

- Wednesday, June 14 (3:30pm) – NRSD Building Project Ground-Breaking
- Thursday, June 15 (3:30pm) – OES Asset/Accessibility Report Meeting

- Thursday, June 22 – Fin Comm Meeting
- Thursday, July 13 (7pm) – Fin Comm Meeting: FY23 Year-End Budget Adjustments
- Thursday, July 20 (6:15pm) – Fin Comm Meeting

Mr. Athanassiou noted that the Select Board has tentatively scheduled Fall Town Meeting for Monday, October 16. At a future meeting, they will present a “calendar” for “due dates” leading up to that Town Meeting (eg, opening and closing of the Warrant, publication of the Warrant, etc.). He understands from Cathy Doane that she plans to provide a 2023 fiscal year-end report, similar to last year’s August 31 report - but she hasn’t determined a specific date yet. Once more of this information is confirmed, then Fin Comm’s Summer and Fall calendar can be reconfirmed.

**Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mahoney; Mr. Counihan seconded. The vote was 6-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Counihan, Mahoney and O’Meara all voting “aye” by roll-call. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. June 1, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft May 5, 2023 and May 8, 2023 Fin Comm Meeting Minutes
3. Special Year-End Transfer Request from the Finance Director (\$13,500)
4. Select Board Meeting Packet for the 5/17/23 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)
5. Finance Committee Liaison Assignments FY24 (materials provided by Mr. Athanassiou)
6. Planning Board Request for Fin Comm Input re Updating of 2006 Comprehensive Plan (materials provided by Mr. Athanassiou)
7. Select Board Meeting Packet for the 5/31/23 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)
8. NRSD Budget Revisions for FY24

The minutes for the June 1, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the June 22, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. Counihan. The vote was 6-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs, Athanassiou, Counihan and Mahoney all voting “aye”. Mr. Kanaga abstained as he was absent from the June 1 meeting. All voters were present in the Nauset Room so this was not a “roll-call” vote.**