



## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 7, 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 8 on the Town website and cable television.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Vice Chair Chris Kanaga, Clerk Elaine Baird (participating remotely) and Committee members Lynn Bruneau, Constance Kremer, Ed Mahoney, and Peter O'Meara (participating remotely). Tony Pearl was absent.

**Guests:** Town Manager Kim Newman was present for the first 15 minutes of the meeting. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

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

There was no public comment. Mr. Athanassiou noted that the Select Board voted on the STM Articles at their meeting the night before.

### **Brief Discussion with Town Manager Kim Newman**

At the beginning of the meeting, Town Manager Kim Newman offered to address any further questions that Fin Comm members might have related to the Warrant Articles. Mr. Kanaga noted that Article 29 includes a number of fee changes related to the new sewers, in particular, a "late fee" of \$250/day if a Downtown property owner (in the Phase 1 sewer area) does not connect to the sewer by the March 2024 deadline. He has heard from a number of property owners in the Downtown area that the connection application process is complicated - and subject to delays in the approval process. He noted that one property owner saw his cost increase by several thousand dollars due to the delay in the multi-step process for approval of the connection application. Mr. Kanaga's suggestion was to simplify, streamline and expedite the application process. He also noted that apparently it is difficult to determine the cause of the delays.

Ms. Newman suggested referring any concerns to her office. Ms. Bruneau (Fin Comm's liaison to the Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners and to the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee) said that it was anticipated that property owners who had contracts in place at the deadline would likely not be fined - similar to the circumstances for the recent deadline compliance for removal/replacement of single-walled oil tanks. It is understood that Cape-based sewer construction engineers and contractors are very busy, with long lead times for providing support for property owners.

### **(0:1:30) Review / Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 8/31/23**

**Motion to approve the 8/31/23 minutes by Ms. Kremer; second by Mr. Mahoney. The vote was 6-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and O'Meara, all voting "aye" by roll-call. Mr. Mahoney abstained as he was absent from the 8/31/23 meeting.**

### **(3:30) Vote on STM Warrant Articles and discuss as needed; address any further Finance Committee preparation that may be needed leading to voting on remaining articles**

**Fin Comm reviewed and discussed the STM Warrant Articles. Except as noted, all motions to recommend were made by Mr. Kanaga and all "seconds" by Mr. Mahoney. All votes were roll-call votes with the results as follows:**

1. FY24 Budget Adjustments - **Vote: 7-0-0**  
As discussed at the 8/31/23 Fin Comm meeting, a prior line item for \$25k for Town Manager re-location expenses has been removed from the Article. The Old King's Highway budget is within Department 840 - "Other Assessments" - with an original FY24 budget of \$10.9k for the OKH assessment for FY24.
2. Pay Bills Of Prior Years - **Recommendation to Be Made at Town Meeting**
3. Fund 8 New Firefighter Positions - **Vote 7-0-0**  
The Article Motion was clarified to confirm at total of \$1.156M with \$231k coming from Free Cash and \$925k to be "raised and appropriated" through a Proposition 2 1/2 general override.
4. Associated Costs for the Fire Department Aerial Ladder Truck Replacement - **Vote 7-0-0**  
Funds to be provided by debt exclusion (borrowing).
5. Fund Repairs to Well No. 4 - **Vote: 7-0-0**
6. Fund Economic and Environmental Initiatives - **Vote 5-2-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou and Kanaga voting "aye" and Messrs. Mahoney and O'Meara voting "nay" - all by roll-call.**  
Mr. O'Meara expressed a concern about the "open-ended-ness" of the Article as written - as though it was creating a "shopping list" with projects not well defined that could go in many directions. Mr. Kanaga wondered whether the list had been proposed or vetted by (which?) Committees? Who had set the priorities?
7. Funding for Sustainability & Energy Manager - **Vote 5-2-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou and Kanaga all voting "aye" and Messrs. Mahoney and O'Meara voting "nay", all by roll-call.**
8. Fund Design of Solar Project at the Water Treatment Plant - **Vote 1-6-0 with Mr. Athanassiou voting "aye" and Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Kanaga, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "nay" by roll-call.**  
Mr. Mahoney suggested that the Town should get State approval for a solar project on the Town's well-field before spending money on a design project.
9. Fund Facility Improvements at the Water Treatment Plant - **Vote: 7-0-0**
10. Appropriate CPC Funds for Preconstruction Planning & Design Plans for Pickleball Courts or Other Municipal Uses at Town's Bay Ridge Lane Property - **Vote: 7-0-0**
11. Fund Succession Planning and Reorganizational-Related Expenses - **Vote: 7-0-0**
12. Fund Human Resources Position - **Vote: 7-0-0**
13. Fund Recreation Department Staffing & Related Operational Expenses - **Vote: 7-0-0**  
Concerns about on-going personnel costs; long-range impacts of adding personnel (eg, OPEB costs). Reference again to "shopping list" mentality. What w/ happen if/when the Town's revenue source(s) collapse (eg, tax base)? That could create problems with long-term debt. Mr. O'Meara noted that from his experience in personnel management and planning, you should add 3-5%/year for long-term personnel-related costs. Mr. Mahoney noted that the Rec Department budget for FY25 should include fee increases to cover additions to Department personnel.
14. Amend Personnel Bylaw to Add Positions - **Vote: 7-0-0**
15. Comprehensive Plan Update - **Motion to support: Ms. Bruneau; Second, Mr. Mahoney. Vote - 7-0-0**

16. Fund Indigenous Peoples Event & Associated Expenses - the Finance Committee will not vote on this Article but instead will speak to the Article at Town Meeting.
17. Special Education Stabilization Fund - Vote: 7-0-0
18. Funding for the Special Education Stabilization Fund - Vote: 7-0-0
19. Transfer FY23 Opioid Settlement Payments from Free Cash to Opioid Stabilization Fund - Vote: 7-0-0
20. Funding for the Opioid Settlement Program Expenses - Vote: 7-0-0
21. Repurpose Bond Surplus Proceeds - Vote: 7-0-0
22. Rescind Bond Authorizations - Vote: 7-0-0
23. Amend General Bylaw Ch. 85 - Animal Control Bylaw for Service Dogs Exemption - the Finance Committee did not vote on this Article; it has “no financial significance”
24. Home Rule Petition for a Pesticide Reduction Bylaw - the Vote was 3-3-1 with Mmes. Baird and Kremer and Mr. Athanassiou voting “aye”; Ms. Bruneau and Messrs. Kanaga and Mahoney voting “nay”; and Mr. O’Meara abstaining - all by roll-call.
25. Authorize Special Act to Dedicate Island Roundabout – Route 28 & 39 - the Finance Committee did not vote on this Article; it has “no financial significance”
26. Expand Phase III Preliminary Design/Project of the CWRMP - the Vote was 6-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting “aye” by roll-call. Mr. O’Meara abstained.
27. Expand Meetinghouse Pond Sewer Collection System Area - the Vote was 6-0-1 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and Mahoney all voting “aye” by roll-call. Mr. O’Meara abstained.
28. Amend Funding For Rock Harbor Fuel Tank Construction - the Finance Committee did not vote on this Article; it has “no financial significance”
29. Authorize Changes In Fee Schedule - Vote: 7-0-0
30. Adopt Specialized Energy Code - the vote was 6-1-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and O’Meara voting “aye” and Mr. Mahoney voting “nay”, all by roll-call.
31. Free Cash Transfer to General Stabilization Fund - the Vote was 6-1-0 with Mmes. Baird and Kremer and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara voting “aye” and Ms. Bruneau voting “nay”, all by roll-call.
32. Alum Treatment at Pilgrim Lake - Recommendation to be Made at Town Meeting  
 Fin Comm reviewed the related discussion from the 9/6/23 Select Board meeting, including input from “Public Comment” and Town Planner George Meservey’s memo to the Select Board included in the meeting packet which outlined “next steps” in moving forward with an alum treatment scenario. Mr. Mahoney wondered what the Town is actually doing or planning to do with regard to Pilgrim Lake, and why - and who is actually monitoring the need - is anything actually measurable? Related to this discussion, Mr. O’Meara said that it would be helpful for residents to understand what progress is being made toward water quality improvement (eg, nitrogen removal) with the on-going sewer efforts as well as other water quality initiatives (eg, oysters in Lonnie’s Pond). Mr. Kanaga again mentioned the delays in the applications for connecting to the sewers - the bureaucracy in the layers of review. Ms. Bruneau noted that she will get the messages to the BOWSC and the consultants.
33. Closing Article - N/A

### **(1:30:00) Updates**

#### **Recent Select Board meeting discussions/decisions (8/23, others)**

There were no updates except as noted during the discussion of the Warrant Articles.

#### **Liaison Reports as appropriate**

Mr. Athanassiou noted that he had participated in a meeting earlier today with Town Manager Kim Newman and Select Board Chair Michael Herman to discuss potential strategies/next steps with regard to the OES Asset and Accessibility Report written by the Habeeb consultants. He also noted a number of other up-coming meetings: NRSD Superintendent Brooke Clenchy is scheduled to meet with the District Town Managers on September 12 for a general discussion re school facilities; OES School Committee on September 18, focused on the Habeeb report; and October 10 - Superintendent Clenchy with OES School Committee Chair Gail Briere, Michael Herman, Nick and possibly others to talk about “next steps” re the Habeeb report.

Ms. Bruneau provided a brief update on the Meetinghouse Pond sewer project, noting that construction is scheduled to begin the week of September 18, with actual “digging” to begin at/near Town Hall. Weekly schedules and detour information is posted each Friday on the Town website.

### **(1:55:00) Review Schedule and Items for Future Agendas**

- Wednesday, September 13, 5pm: Joint Public Hearing with Select Board on FY25 Budget Priorities; Finance Director’s report on FY23 financial results.
- Thursday, September 21, 6:15pm: Fin Comm mtg; Energy and Climate Action Committee re “opt-in specialized energy code” with feedback on our 7/20/23 meeting.
- Thursday, October 5, 7pm: Fin Comm mtg, prepare for the October 16 STM.
- Thursday, October 12: Fin Comm mtg; meet w Michael Herman re Select Board goals.
- Monday, October 16, 5:30pm: Fin Comm mtg prior to STM for final voting.
- Monday, October 16, 6pm: Special Town Meeting.
- Thursday, October 19, 6:15 pm: Fin Co, mm mtg, debrief of STM.
- Thursday, November 2, 7pm: Fin Comm mtg

### **Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mahoney; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 7-0-0 with all Fin Comm members voting “aye”.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. September 7, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft August 31, 2023 Fin Comm Meeting Minutes
3. Select Board meeting packet for the September 6, 2023 Select Board meeting (Select Board website)
4. Updated Draft Warrant Articles and Updated Warrant Article Index 9/7/23

The minutes for the September 7, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the September 21, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was 6-0-2 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Kanaga, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll call. Mr. Pearl abstained as he was absent from the 9/7/23 meeting and Mr. Abel abstained as he had not yet joined the Finance Committee.**