



Town of Orleans
Finance Committee
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'23 OCT 6 2:40PM

Elaine Baird
ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 21, 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 8 on the Town website and cable television.

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

Guests: Select Board Liaison Meff Runyon; Climate Action Committee Chairman John Londa and Committee member Roger McDaniel. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for the meeting.

(00:00) Announcements/Public Comment

Mr. Kanaga welcomed new Finance Committee member David Abel.

Ms. Bruneau reminded the audience of several public hearings being held at the Select Board's meeting next Wednesday (9/27/23): the Animal Control Bylaw, the Pesticide Bylaw, the Sewer-related Fee Changes and the Specialized Energy Code.

Ms. Bruneau also noted that there is an Orleans Citizens Forum on Thursday, September 28 from 5-6:30pm at the Senior Center with Constance Kremer representing the Finance Committee on the panel.

(3:00) Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 9/7/23 and 9/13/203

- 9/7/23 – Ms. Baird moved to approve the minutes of the 9/7/23 meeting; Ms. Kremer seconded. The Finance Committee voted 6-0-2 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Kanaga, O'Meara and Mahoney all voting "aye" by roll-call. Messrs. Pearl and Abel abstained as they were not at the 9/7/23 meeting (Mr. Abel was not yet a member of Fin Comm).
- 9/13/23 – Ms. Baird moved to approve the minutes of the 9/13/23 meeting; Mr. Pearl seconded. The Finance Committee voted 6-0-2 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Kanaga, O'Meara and Pearl all voting "aye" by roll-call. Messrs. Pearl and Abel abstained as they were not at the 9/13/23 meeting (Mr. Abel had not yet joined the Finance Committee).

(5:00) Energy and Climate Action Committee discussion re "opt-in specialized building code" with feedback on Fin Comm's 7-20 meeting.

Roger McDaniel and John Londa of the Energy and Climate Action Committee, were present to discuss the "opt-in specialized building code". Mr. McDaniel discussed the size of units/homes as well as other factors that trigger the new building code (see "FAQ" material provided by the Climate Action Committee for details).

Mr. Mahoney asked about the costs – operating and construction – to homeowners who will use the code. Mr. McDaniel pointed to the case studies in the FAQs which show that typically the

long-term savings outweigh the upfront costs. Mr. Pearl was concerned that this code would make “affordable housing” less affordable. Mr. McDaniel said that all things considered, this will make the housing more affordable, and more efficient.

Ms. Baird asked whether the “specialized code” was a mandate from the State. Mr. McDaniel said that the code as written comes from a state organization, but it must be a town-by-town decision to “opt-in” to accept the code. At least 20 communities, throughout the State, will have this on their Town Meeting warrants this fall.

There was further discussion about the implementation of the code. Mr. Kanaga asked how widespread implementation would impact the Cape’s energy grid. Mr. McDaniel said that Eversource will be hosting a discussion on this question in the near future.

Mr. Kanaga asked how the code would work with various regulatory boards and commissions such as the Town’s Old King’s Highway Committee and Historical Commission, and how conflicts would be settled.

Finance Committee’s newest member, David Abel, has extensive experience in managing properties of varying sizes and complexities in the Boston area and now in Provincetown. He is very familiar with the potential for significant energy savings with well-designed buildings and “passive” houses.

Mr. Kanaga thanked the Climate Action Committee representatives for their hard work on this issue - particularly in the preparation of the FAQs - and for returning to a Fin Comm meeting with answers to many of our earlier questions.

(43:00) Further Discussion re the 9-13 Joint Public Hearing with Select Board on FY25 Budget Priorities and the Finance Director’s report on FY23 financial results.

Ms. Bruneau reviewed highlights of the joint Public Hearing with the Select Board which she, Mr. Athanassiou, Ms. Baird, and Mr. Pearl attended. Fin Comm members discussed budget priorities and future goals. The minutes from that meeting (reviewed and approved at tonight’s meeting) provide a detailed review of key points made by Fin Comm members and others at the Public Hearing.

Ms. Bruneau noted that she has not yet reviewed the Finance Director Cathy Doane’s presentation of the FY23 Finance Results from that same meeting (9/13/23). (The presentation was forwarded to Fin Comm the following day.) Ms. Bruneau suggested tabling the discussion on that material until a subsequent Fin Comm meeting.

(50:00) Discussion of new input re Fall STM Warrant Articles and discuss as needed; address any further Finance Committee preparation that may be needed leading to voting on remaining articles.

Ms. Bruneau provided Fin Comm members with a copy of the Warrant Index with the Fin Comm votes on it. The following Articles have split votes:

- Articles 6 (EV Charging Stations, etc.) and 7 (Energy and Sustainability Manager) were both voted 5-2 (with Messrs. Mahoney and O’Meara as the “nay” votes);

- Article 8 (Solar Design at the Water Treatment Plant) was voted as 1-6. However, since the vote, Fin Comm has learned that the request for special legislation to permit a solar array on the Town's wellfield requires a preliminary design before the request is considered. Most of Fin Comm's "nay" votes had originally thought that permission s/be granted before any money was spent on a design. Unfortunately, this information is not included in the Article itself. Fin Comm could re-vote this Article before Town Meeting.
- Article 24 (Pesticide Bylaw) was voted 3-3-1 ("aye" votes - Athanassiou, Baird and Kremer; "nay" votes - Bruneau, Kanaga and Mahoney; Mr. O'Meara abstained);
- Articles 30 (Stretch Energy Code) and 31 (Free Cash) were voted on 6-1 (Mr. Mahoney was the "nay" vote for Article 30; Ms. Bruneau for Article 31).

The following Articles do not have a Fin Comm vote taken to date:

- Article 2 (Bills of Prior Years) - normally voted at Town Meeting when info is available;
- Article 16 (Indigenous Peoples) - Fin Comm may decide not to vote on this one;
- Article 32 (Alum Treatment at Pilgrim Lake) - not voted initially, pending clarification/further information.

Ms. Bruneau suggested that one approach for Fin Comm support for various Warrant Articles might be to group them by topic as we have done in the past, for example:

- Articles 3 and 4 - Fire/Rescue Department Articles;
- Articles 1 (line 5), 7 and 11 through 14 - all related to Reorganization, Succession Planning, Staffing. Fin Comm support for these Articles could signal support for Town Manager Kim Newman and her efforts to effect change in Town Hall;
- Articles 6, 8, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32 - all related to "green" initiatives and/or environmental concerns. These Articles could be addressed together - or split into 2 or 3 groups (eg, sewer Articles separate from others);
- Articles 17 and 18 - Special Ed Stabilization Fund Articles. (These Articles might not need additional support at Town Meeting.).

Mr. Mahoney will consider whether he wants to explain his "nay" votes on Articles 6 and 7. Mr. O'Meara will be out of town and unable to attend Town Meeting (and thus unable to participate in the "nay" vote discussion).

Ms. Bruneau will support Articles 3 and 4 - the Fire/Rescue Department Articles.

Mr. Kanaga and Ms. Baird discussed Article 32 and how the Alum Treatment for Pilgrim Lake would work. Fin Comm will take up a vote on this Article at a future meeting. Mr. Runyon further described the project and how Alum treatments work.

Further Fin Comm speakers for Town Meeting will be determined at the next meeting.

(1:20:00) Discussion of proposal to cancel the Thursday, October 19 Fin Comm meeting and to schedule the STM debrief for the November 2 Fin Comm meeting.

Fin Comm discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. Ms. Kremer had previously suggested canceling the 10/19/23 with Fin Comm Chairman Nick Athanassiou's concurrence, giving Committee members a break before the holidays and getting ready for the FY25 budget season.

Fin Comm members were in agreement. Ms. Bruneau indicated that she would contact the Town Clerk's Office and Media Operations re the schedule change.

(1:30:00) Updates

Liaison Reports as appropriate.

Ms. Bruneau discussed the Affordable Housing Trust Fund meeting on Tuesday, 9/19/23. Both the 107 Main Street project and the CC5/Pennrose project have received ARPA "gap" funding and both projects are proceeding with permitting and final financing. 107 Main Street will likely break ground in February 2024 with modular construction. The RFP for the Governor Prence project is out with responses due in mid-November; mandatory site visits are scheduled.

Ms. Bruneau provided a brief update on this week's OES School Committee meeting (9/18/23). She and Ms. Kremer and Ms. Baird attended the meeting. She noted that the renovation/replacement discussion focused solely on those options and challenges with no mention of regionalization or other approaches (eg, designing a multi-function facility that might include the school plus other uses). Fin Comm further discussed the declining OES enrollment and what the future might look like if trends continue.

Ms. Bruneau also provided an update on the Town's sewer projects and facilities - including the now-underway Meetinghouse Pond Project (which currently limits access to the Town Hall parking lot during the day) as well as the status of Phase 1 (Downtown) sewer connections and WWTF operations.

(1:40:00) Review Meetings Schedule and Items for Future Agendas

- Thursday, October 5 (7pm): Fin Comm meeting; Prepare for Fin Comm participation in Oct 16 STM; Fire Chief Geoff Deering re OFD Warrant Articles
- Thursday, October 12 (7pm): Fin Comm meeting; Meet w Michael Herman re Select Board goals; Final Fin Comm preparation for STM
- Monday, Oct16 (5:30pm): Fin Comm mtg prior to STM for final votes (NRMS Gym)
- Monday, Oct 16 (6pm): Special Town Meeting (NRMS Gym)
- Thursday, October 19 (6:15 pm): Fin Comm Meeting CANCELLED
- Thursday, November 2 (7pm): Fin Comm meeting. Debrief of STM

(1:43:35) Adjourn

Motion by Mr. Mahoney to adjourn; second by Mr. Pearl. The vote was unanimous, 8-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. September 21, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Draft minutes for the 9/7/23 Finance Committee meeting
3. Draft minutes for the 9/13/23 joint meeting of the Finance Committee with the Select Board for the Public Hearing on Budget Priorities
4. Specialized Energy Code "Frequently Asked Questions" draft document dated 9/19/23 from the Climate Action Committee

5. Finance Committee Budget Priority Materials Discussed at the 9/13/23 Joint Meeting with the Select Board for the Public Hearing on Budget Priorities (included with the 9/13/23 meeting minutes)
6. Finance Director Cathy Doane's Presentation on the FY23 Year-End Financial Results (presented at the 9/13/23 Select Board meeting - shared with Fin Comm on 9/14/23)
7. Fall/Special Town Meeting Warrant for 10/16/23
8. Warrant Article Index for the 10/16/23 Warrant (including Fin Comm votes)

The minutes for the September 21, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the October 5, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Ms. Kremer. The vote was unanimous, 7-0-0, with all Fin Comm members voting present in the Nauset Room (Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Mahoney and Pearl).**