



**Town of Orleans**  
Finance Committee  
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*Julia Hyatt*  
ASST  
ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

**MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, October 12, 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 Chairman Chris Kanaga, Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members David Abel, Lynn Bruneau, Constance Kremer, Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara (the latter participating remotely). Tony Pearl was absent.

**Guests:** Select Board Chair Michael Herman. Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting. Orleans resident Bob Sinclair was also present.

**(00:00) Announcements/Public Comment**

Bob Sinclair, Tonset Road, expressed his appreciation for the establishment of the Select Board Goals that will be discussed further in the meeting. He hoped to find out if there would be a monitoring process to determine if the goals had been reached.

Ms. Bruneau reminded the audience that Property and Personal Property Taxes are due November 1; the Town Tax Collector has copies of bills, which can also be found online. Bills may be paid online, or mailed in, or dropped off.

Ms. Bruneau also reminded the audience about the bridge dedication in honor of Seaman Norman Wood Finch, US Coast Guard, a World War I casualty. The Route 28 bridge will be dedicated on October 21 at 10 AM. Much fanfare is expected and the public is invited to attend.

**(3:30) Discussion about Select Board Goals with Select Board Chair Michael Herman**

Mr. Athanassiou thanked Mr. Herman for joining Fin Comm this evening.

Mr. Herman noted that the Select Board (SB) is the chief goal-setting and policy-setting body of the Town. This year, the SB has taken a new approach by including objectives and actions for each goal. There are 15 goals and they are available on the SB page on the Town website: <https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/707/Select-Board>

Mr. Herman discussed the "future agenda items" portion of the SB agenda, a list which continues to grow. These items have been transformed into some of the FY24 Goals. He spoke further to the SB's process in arriving at the final set of goals, including receiving input from residents/others. He also noted that Town Manager Kim Newman had suggested linking the SB Goals to the Warrant Articles as printed in the Warrant. He was also clear that it is not intended to accomplish all of the goals in a single year, in FY24. In mid-November, the first read-out of progress against the goals will be scheduled for a Select Board meeting, then others in January, March and May.

Ms. Bruneau asked Mr. Herman to review the individual goals. Mr. Mahoney asked how these were to be measured and when the deadlines are. Mr. Herman said that there was not a timeline but some of the goals do have items coming to Town Meeting. Mr. Kanaga said that, by making these goals without a deadline likely creates a hindrance when working with the Planning Board, which has the zoning and other permitting authority. He cited the Planning Board as a previous barrier to development in Town. Ms. Kremer said that the Director of Planning has not been a visionary for the Town; she was hopeful that these goals and collaboration of Boards and a new Town Manager would help move these items forward.

Mr. Herman suggested that perhaps SB Goals lacked support in the past. Mr. Athanassiou noted that Board and Committee memberships change over time and wondered how to coordinate all of those involved with “planning”. The SB Goals should be the Town’s goals and the goals for Department managers. He also noted that previously, leadership goals often mimicked their job descriptions - thus were hardly “goals”.

Mr. Herman said that a version of the SB Goals will be posted on the SB website with progress-to-date updated periodically. Mr. O’Meara suggested limiting the goals to a timeline of 1-3 years, to assist people in accomplishing them and in meeting the objectives.

- 1) To create a Vibrant, Livable and Sustainable Village Center.
  - a. Mr. Herman noted various ideas on how to obtain this goal, including zoning. The SB is looking to improve commercial, retail, and residential zoning options in Town.
  - b. Ms. Baird asked about any focus on the visual attractiveness of the Town - helping to preserve the character of the Town (not a row of auto dealerships and repair shops). Mr. Herman noted that views of “aesthetics” vary. He also said that the goals would change every year.
- 2) The Town of Orleans will strive to be energy independent by 2030 (meaning “Town Hall” - Town government - not necessarily the Whole Town)
  - a. This includes the spending down of existing Green Community Grant Funds, and applying for future funds; eg, developing EV charging stations
  - b. Mr. Herman referred to a hand-out for Town Meeting, also available on the Town website and referred to a number of solar case studies
- 3) Town government will communicate more effectively with residents, taxpayers, visitors and the public.
  - a. This goal will include the Town Manager assessing communication and marketing needs, and improving the Town website.
  - b. Mr. Herman noted a plan to include a media/marketing coordinator in the “ask” for May Town Meeting
  - c. Ms. Kremer noted that analytics (eg, re the use of the Town website) can be outsourced. She also referred to the use of social media and signage (eg, more of both to “advertise” Town events).
  - d. Ms. Baird suggested getting more funding from Comcast - beyond what is paid to support LCTV. Mr. Herman noted that LCTV is looking for another Orleans-based Board member.
- 4) Town will capitalize on the use of town owned property/assets

- a. The SB plans to develop use plans for Bay Ridge Lane and Gavigan Properties, as well as Depot Square, Nauset Gazebo, and 44 Main St.
- 5) Improve protection of our most important asset, the environment – Waters, Land and Wildlife.
  - a. This includes several items that are on future Town Meeting Warrants, including the Pesticide Bylaw and implementing Pay as You Throw (note however, that the Board of Health is not a fan of “PAYT”).
- 6) Select Board will revise and amend where necessary Select Board Policies and Town Bylaws, so they are clear, concise and consistent.
  - a. Actions include establishing a task force to meet the objective and recommend possible changes to the Select Board by June 2024.
  - b. Mr. Herman said that this is underway (though no detail was provided re the process)
- 7) The Select Board will partner with the Orleans Elementary School and Nauset Regional School District
  - a. The action for this goal is to continue meeting regularly with both School Committees and Administration.
  - b. Ms. Bruneau asked specifically about planning for OES (renovate vs new) as well as the High School building project
- 8) Support Town Manager to develop an effective Succession Plan for Town staff
  - a. The SB plans to request the Town Manager to prepare an analysis of key positions and an organization chart for ongoing succession. The SB will review the analysis and plan recommendations accordingly.
  - b. Multiple Warrant Articles for Special Town Meeting
- 9) Engage with Wampanoag Nation & Indigenous People
  - a. The SB hopes to meet with the Wampanoag leadership and other indigenous communities to understand current and future initiatives.
  - b. Warrant Article 16 for Special Town Meeting
- 10) The Select Board will work to broaden Orleans as a diverse and sustainable community.
  - a. Actions for this goal include filling the Rec Director role, and other Recreation positions; to attract younger families to Town; and to help seniors age in place.
- 11) Continued strong, responsive, transparent, and responsible finances.
  - a. The objective is to create a 20-year financial plan for the Town by supporting the Long Term Capital Planning process and to solicit public recommendations from Town Finance Director, Treasurer, and Assessor to engage residents to understand and support Town Livability
  - b. Some discussion re definition of “livability” in this context
- 12) Solve the Fire & Rescue building needs and support staffing.
  - a. The SB plans to have a defined plan to meet this goal by 2024 and will do so by finding a site for a new building, supporting 8 new Firefighter positions, and supporting initiatives for national Fire and Rescue accreditation.
- 13) Orleans will continue to prioritize Housing and Wastewater projects
  - a. The SB will work with stakeholder groups as the leads to provide public awareness and education of current projects in pipeline, and support new projects to meet continued critical housing and wastewater needs.
- 14) Invite Lower/Outer Cape Towns to partner on regional projects and services.

- a. The objective of this goal is to efficiently and cost effectively develop regional community projects and services by engaging a facilitator to evaluate and coordinate regional resource sharing among the Lower/Outer Cape Towns.
  - b. Article 7 for Special Town Meeting proposes funding a part-time Energy Manager - a start for a regional role
- 15) Select Board to create, assign leadership to follow through on FY24 goals.
- a. This goal is constantly being worked on and met as SB members work with staff and the Town Manager and stakeholders to achieve the SB goals

Mr. Mahoney noted several goals refer to “sustainability”. What about affordability - especially for seniors? The Town’s tax rate is going up faster than inflation. Goals make no mention of support for “aging in place”. Mr. Herman referred to Goal 11 re “livability”. Mr. Mahoney’s focus was more on running the Town efficiently and cost-effectively. Mr. Herman referred to the newly-formed Long-Term Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Mahoney said that capital typically means more money and more debt.

Mr. O’Meara said that the Goals lack a reasonable focus and timelines - they are trying to do too much for everyone. A “rainbow” of goals is a recipe for accomplishing nothing, especially with no one to pay for all of it. He noted 2 demographics in Town - those in a fixed income (many of our seniors) - and the younger families trying to get established, with kids in school and/or paying for college tuition. Other comments made that goals are “overwhelming” - that they should have timelines for deliverables - otherwise it’s “manana”. What is most important - safety and security, education.

Mr. Abel noted that he supports the Goals generally; likely some will fail. He asked Mr. Herman if the Town is pushing for a share of Inflation Reduction Act benefits.

Ms. Baird noted that Snow Library wasn’t mentioned in the Goals. Mr. Herman replied that the Goals weren’t intended to include all Town projects.

Mr. Sinclair again thanked Mr. Herman for the goal-setting and the process, noting that typically goals are based on data or identified problems. He said that the SB has the authority and responsibility to engage the Town and stakeholders in achieving these goals; the goals are for the Town. Mr. Sinclair spoke further to the process and resident engagement in determining these goals:

1. In solving a problem, the way that it is introduced and who is involved is important in how the decision is made.
2. With reduced resources, you need to increase productivity (not necessarily taxes).
3. The consequences of projects for all populations should be considered.
4. Consultants s/be used wisely; they should not be doing the work that staff can/should do.

How to capture all of this - without increasing the gap between Town Hall and the Town? Mr. Sinclair noted further that the Goals (and by implication, other Town Hall communications) are not shared broadly across Town. Many people in Town are silent.

Mr. Athanassiou thanked Mr. Herman and Mr. Sinclair for their participation in tonight’s meeting.

**(1:29:00) Review/Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – 10/5/2023**

- 10/5/23 – Ms. Baird moved to approve the minutes of 10/5/23; Mr. Kanaga seconded. The Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 with Mmes. Baird, Bruneau and Kremer and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Kanaga, Mahoney and O’Meara all voting “aye” by roll-call.

**(1:31:00) Discussion of any new input re Fall STM Warrant Articles; vote/re-vote remaining Warrant Articles as appropriate**

Ms. Bruneau asked Mr. Athanassiou to request further information from Cathy Doane, Finance Director, for further detail regarding Article 2 - “Pay Bills of Prior Years” prior to the 10/16 Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Abel asked if Fin Comm could reconsider the Article 16 - “Indigenous Peoples” vote, to hopefully change the votes of some opposed members. Ms. Bruneau said this was not appropriate. Mr. Kanaga did not feel that re-voting due to absences was appropriate, either. Mr. Athanassiou noted that if new information were brought to the surface, that could be an appropriate time to revote. This was not the case with the Indigenous Peoples Article.

**(1:37:00) Review Fin Comm talking points by assigned speakers for Fall STM**

Ms. Bruneau and Ms. Kremer noted that they are both working on talking points for the Fall STM. Mr. Mahoney has written comments for the Articles that he opposed; however, at present, he does not plan to speak at Town Meeting. There was further discussion around Fin Comm’s approach to speaking to specific Articles.

**(1:42:00) Updates**

Liaison Reports as appropriate.

Ms. Bruneau discussed a summarized list of questions for Finance Director Cathy Doane based on Ms. Doane’s FY23 Year-End Finance Results presentation to the Select Board on 9/13. Ms. Bruneau will draft an email based on these questions to share with Mr. Athanassiou before sending the questions to Ms. Doane.

Ms. Bruneau noted that the Planning Board had a walk-through of survey questions that they plan to send out regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update. The draft survey questions are available on the Town website, in the 10/10/2023 Planning Board meeting packet.

Ms. Bruneau also discussed the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee meeting, including the update of the Town’s Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) as well as planning for subsequent sewer projects. She will continue to forward the weekly Meetinghouse Pond sewer project updates/schedules each Friday.

**(1:50:00) Review Meetings Schedule and Items for Future Agendas**

- Monday, October 16, 5:30pm: Fin Comm meeting prior to STM for final voting.
- Monday, October 16, 6pm: Special Town Meeting.
- Thursday, November 2, 7pm: Fin Comm meeting. Debrief of STM; review/approval of FY25 Fin Comm budget.
- Thursday, November 16, 6:15pm: Fin Comm meeting

**(1:51:00) Adjourn**

**Mr. Mahoney moved to adjourn; Mr. Kanaga seconded. The vote was unanimous, 8-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Courtney Butler, Secretary

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

1. FY24 Select Board Goals (Select Board website)
2. Draft 10/5/2023 Fin Comm meeting minutes
3. Warrant Index as of 10/5/2023
4. Special Town Meeting Warrant for 10/16/23 (Town website)
5. Fin Comm speaking assignments and draft "talking points"
6. LB email of 10/12/23 with questions for Finance Director Cathy Doane re FY23 Year-End Financial Results

The minutes for the October 12, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the November 2, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. Kanaga. The vote was 7-0-0 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Abel, Athanassiou, Kanaga, Mahoney and O'Meara all voting "aye" by roll-call.**