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TOWN OF ORLEANS
TOWN CLERKS OFFICE

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APPROVED: 8/27/09

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Aug. 13, 2009, meeting of the Orleans Finance Committee was convened by Committee Chairman Walter Bennett at 7:00 p.m. in the Nauset Room of the Orleans Town Hall. Present constituting a quorum were Mr. Bennett, Edwin Barr, Mark Fiegel, Dale Fuller, Laurence Hayward, Gwen A. Holden Kelly, Paul Rooker, and Rick Sigel. Committee member John Hodgson was absent.

Guest

Mark Carron, Board of Selectmen liaison to the Finance Committee, was in attendance at the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Mr. Fuller, the minutes of the July 23, 2009, meeting were approved as written 6-0-2. (Ms. Holden Kelly and Mr. Sigel abstaining)

New Business

Promoting Public Participation in the Upcoming Sep. 16, 2009, Budget Priorities Hearing: Mr. Barr reviewed several possible strategies for promoting greater citizen participation in the joint Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee public hearing on fiscal year 2011 budget priorities that is scheduled for Sept. 16, 2009. Those strategies, shared with Finance Committee members in an Aug. 1 email, included a brochure, an email outreach campaign, and an online survey of Orleans citizens. Committee members discussed Mr. Barr's proposed strategies and identified several issues that will need to be considered in advancing any initiatives to increase public participation in the Town budget development process:

- Overcoming difficulties in engaging members of the public in discussions of budget priorities before specific proposals are put before them;
- What type of information the Finance Committee would hope to receive from Orleans citizens in response to any campaign to increase public input on budget priorities;
- The advisability of refining and limiting the number of spending items included in any brochure, email, or survey distributed to the public on which the committee would like to seek citizen input and the need to make certain that all items listed fall within the Finance Committee's responsibilities for setting budget priorities under the Town Charter;
- The need to devise strategies for compiling and responding to public input on budget priorities;
- How the Finance Committee will use public input on budget priorities to inform its development of spending recommendations for the Town.

Committee members were asked to review Mr. Barr's proposals further in preparation for continued discussion at a future Finance Committee meeting of strategies for encouraging Orleans citizens to participate in the Sept. 16 meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

The Budget Subcommittee: Mr. Fuller reported that he met with Town Administrator John F. Kelly and David A. Withrow, Orleans Director of Municipal Finance to review the points of Finance Committee's suggested changes to the budget process. He said that Messrs. Kelly and Withrow advised him that they believe the current budget system is working well. They noted that felt that some of the changes in the process suggested by the Finance Committee already are in place and that therefore no additional changes are necessary. Mr. Fuller responded that the Finance Committee nevertheless still believes that some improvements can be made. Highlights of the discussion included:

- That a "Worst Case Plan be made part of the final budget in case expected revenues fail to materialize. Mr. Fuller was told that such a plan with potential cuts was already in place for the fiscal year 2010 budget; since the Finance Committee has seen only the lists of potential cuts prepared to meet the planned fiscal year 2010 budget, Mr. Fuller asked for a copy of the contingency plan.
- That a system of variance from budget reports by department be put in place. Mr. Kelly said that he does internally monitor each department monthly. Mr. Fuller asked that the Finance Committee be included in the distribution of the reports.

Mr. Fuller also reported that the Finance Committee's project to monitor budgets on a monthly basis is on track and that Mr. Withrow will provide the Finance Committee monthly budget updates for each of the Committee members. Those updates will show annual budget allocations and year-to-date expenditures.

Mr. Rooker asked if we have seen a year end fiscal year 2009 report. Mr. Fuller responded that he was in process of obtaining a copy.

Mr. Bennett reported that the fiscal year 2011 budget books are scheduled to be available on Feb. 15, 2010. He has asked Mr. Fuller to pick up the books when they become available and distribute them to Finance Committee members.

The School Subcommittee: Mr. Hayward reported that his subcommittee has not met to date, but plans to convene within the next two weeks.

The Wastewater Subcommittee: Ms. Holden Kelly reported that the Wastewater Subcommittee has met twice, on July 14 and July 30. She said that Subcommittee members plan to focus their attention on wastewater management-related issues that have the most significant cost implications for the Town. She said that there is a general consensus among the Subcommittee members that the Wastewater Management Validation & Design Committee (WMV&DC) has identified a number of questions and issues that the Subcommittee believes have serious cost implications and therefore merit response. The Subcommittee also discussed the scheduled September meeting between the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and the Orleans Board of Selectmen, and the need to get a better handle on the CLF's interest in Orleans.

Mr. Bennett noted that WMV&DC Chairman Paul Ammann and Vice Chairman Ed Daly have offered to meet with Finance Committee members to answer any questions that they may have concerning the findings of the peer review of the MEP Pleasant Bay Report.

On a motion made by Mr. Fuller, the Finance Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with WMV&DC representatives during its regularly scheduled Aug. 27 meeting 8-0-0. Committee members were advised to review the final report of the WMV&DC's peer review which is available online at the Town's website. It also was suggested that Committee members review the final report of the Woods Hole Group which was hired by the Town to consult on several issues identified by the WMV&DC in its preliminary review of the Pleasant Bay Report. That report also is available on line at the Town's website.

Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Fiegel to lead the discussion with WMV&DC representatives on Aug. 27.

Board of Selectmen Reports

Mr. Fiegel reported on the Aug. 5 and Aug. 12 meetings of the Orleans Board of Selectmen.

Committee and Department Reports

Committee Liaison Reports

Finance Committee members reported on meetings and activities of the following Town boards and committees:

- Aug. 6 meeting of the Community Preservation Committee (Ms. Holden Kelly);
- July 30 meeting of the Nauset Regional School Committee (Mr. Hayward);
- Board of Water Commissioners (Rick Sigel);
- Aug. 11 meeting of the Wastewater Management Validation & Design Committee (Mr. Fiegel);
- Aug. 3 meeting of the Orleans Renewable Energy Committee (Mr. Rooker).

Department Reports

Mr. Barr reported that he has had preliminary meetings with his assigned department to discuss fiscal year 2011 budget needs and priorities.

Mr. Bennett advised Finance Committee members that he would like all Committee members to have met with their assigned departments at least once before the Sept. 16 joint Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee public hearing so that members will have garnered some understanding of the budget concerns of their respective departments before that hearing.

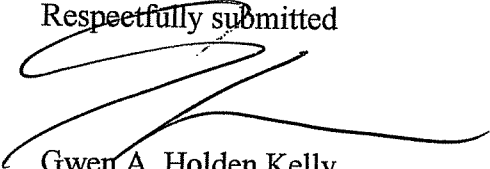
Old Business

None.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Fiegel, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Gwen A. Holden Kelly
Recording Secretary