


**TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW  
DELAWARE**

July 1, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager



SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of July 8, 2025

**School Resource Officer (SRO) Lord Baltimore Elementary School**

Mayor Reddington, Councilman Cobb, Chief McLaughlin and I have been attending Finance and Board meetings over the past month and making comments in support of and justifying the support of the Town SRO, highlighting the roles and programs offered by Ocean View's SRO and stressing the inequity of past funding support for Ocean View by the district.

A board meeting was scheduled for July 1<sup>st</sup> during which the Town SRO agreements were to be discussed and voted on. We were again in attendance, and all made statements and ultimately responded to questions. I am happy to advise that the Indian River School District Board approved all Town agreements at the level of funding requested with a vote of 6 to 4. This outcome is indicative of a portion of the board recognizing its past inequity in funding Ocean View's SRO. Our funding level for the 2025/2026 school year is \$80,000. The one caveat the made part of the approval is that our SRO will assist and where possible train the other SRO in delivering similar programs at the other district schools. This will be possible to some extent except for programs that would not being age appropriate for high school or middle school students.

We're very pleased with this outcome, however, hope to find that the district takes steps to address equity fully by instituting a set amount for all SRO including the Delaware State Police. Currently the district funds DSP at a higher level with no justification. As all officers assigned SRO duties from the different entities will have varied all-in costs (wages and benefits differ greatly) it seems a set SRO rate for full time coverage (regardless of the number of schools) with CPI increases annually would better inform the district for funding purposes and the Towns/DSP for budgeting. The annual cajoling is no way to run such an important safety and security effort.

**Concert Series at John West Park - Rescheduled Dates due to rain**

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**Hot Sauce** Sunday August 17, 2025

**The Funsters** Friday August 29, 2025 (Labor Day Weekend Friday night)

### **Attempt to Purchase Open Space – 150 Woodland Avenue**

As you are aware, on June 23<sup>rd</sup> the Town submitted an offer for the purchase of the open space/lot located at 150 Woodland Avenue. Unfortunately, our strong offer was not accepted by the seller thereby eliminating the opportunity to develop the corner property into an open space beautification site versus its being developed. I appreciate the Town Council's support in the effort and our attempt to maintain the parcel as open space.

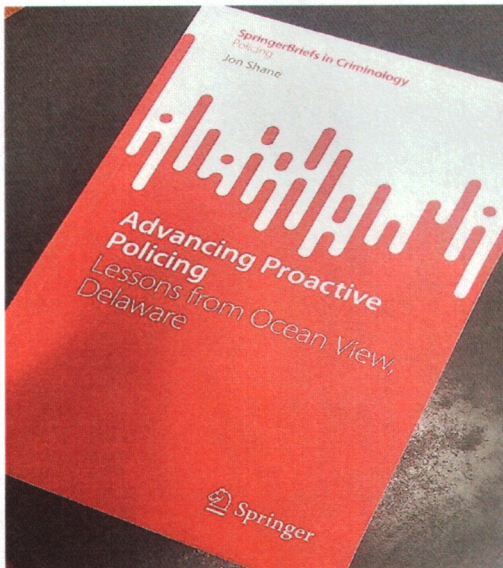
### **Generator 201 Central – Screening**

We have decided that we will plant arborvitae around the new generator to screen it from view. Public works Manager Matt Martin had that idea which will save funding and look much better! We will likely wait until fall to plant the trees.

### **Assawoman Trail Expansion – Outreach**

I have had additional calls asking for updates on this DNREC project which I have pushed out to DNREC's Park Resource Manager Bob Ehemann. I have also made a request for the most up to date design details and for information regarding their park funding priority listing as Rob Ehemann advised that "this is not a park priority (we have many trail projects in the queue) and funding is not secured," so they are in a holding pattern right now. Some residents have suggested that they would like to start a letter writing campaign. I have advised that we will remain in contact with DNREC and will share any additional information if it becomes available.

### **Advancing Proactive Policing – Lessons from Ocean View, Delaware, by Jon Shane**



We are now in possession of several copies of the book recently released and which focuses on lessons from non-other than the Ocean View Police Department. Chief McLaughlin has previously shared that the book was being published but I felt it important to share it more prominently in my report as well as share the acknowledgement of its author Jon Shane, and his appreciation for Chief McLaughlin, staff and elected official for the support provided in completing the study.

The focus of the book is Activity Based Budgeting (ABB) and the inherent conflict between the importance of public safety in a community and the associated cost of offering public safety services for local governments.

### **Yoga in the Park**

The yoga in the park offering has gotten off to a good start this summer with typically 9 or 10 participants a class – currently held on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings at 8am. The instructor also has the option to move into our community center for inclement days. This, like our



outdoor exercise equipment, paved walking path and bocce ball courts are some of the options we're making available to promote health and wellness in the community. Likewise, during the school year, the UD's Lifelong Learning Program also offers fitness and other growth and creative classes for members of the community!



#### **Congratulations and appreciation to Captain Heath**

**Hall** of the Ocean View Police Department for his participation and graduation from the inaugural **FBI-LEEDA Fire Star Chief Executive Institute.**

Captain Hall was one of only 4 law enforcement officers selected from across the state to participate in the groundbreaking program that brought together command-level personnel from 12 states!

#### **Blue Star Memorial – Thank you Salt Air Gardener's!**

I must share a thank you with our Salt Air Gardener's for their continued support and maintenance of the Town's Blue Star Memorial located at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Woodland Ave. The plants are well established and cared for making for a beautiful addition to the Town while serving as our recognition and tribute to those who have served our country in the armed forces. I also thank our public works staff for their dedication to watering the facility throughout the hot dry periods of summer.



#### **Outreach and Engagement:**

I participated in various meetings/engagements/events including those with the Historic Village in Ocean View as Board member, , League of Local Government – Legislative issues, Sussex County



Association of Towns (SCAT), , Scout Troop 281 and Bonkey's Ice Cream – event support, Indian River School District – SRO Agreement, finance discussion and board meetings, Senator Hocker and Representative Gray regarding various Bills before the legislature that are of concern and Bond Bill request, PFM regarding ongoing Compensation study, IACP regarding ongoing Risk analysis, International City Manager's Association, Cottage Tour Organizers in support of the South Coastal Library, Millville Volunteer Fire Company, and various other vendors and contractors, the Town Solicitor, and residents, organizations or contractors in response to requests etc.