

TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE

March 5, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager



SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of March 10, 2026

FY2027 Budget Proposed

As you're aware, we delivered the FY2027 Operating and Capital Budgets to Council in February. This followed an effort that began in the Fall of 2025, where all departments participated fully in the effort lead by Finance Director Dawn Parks. Our process included departmental budget meetings, with discussions surrounding how we anticipate finishing the current fiscal year, trends for FY2027 and beyond, expectations and forecasting.

On Tuesday, March 3rd we held a Budget Workshop, where we presented highlights, responded to questions and asked for direction on various items. Both the budget documents and workshop presentation documents remain on our website for review by the public. In addition, the budget workshop is available to view on OVTV (channels 818 and 78) for the next month and on our YouTube channel. The workshop also included a section related to borrowing for long life infrastructure projects. This discussion continues.

The FY2027 proposed Operating Budget totals \$7,065,060 and the proposed Capital Program totals \$3,900,150. It recommends maintaining our current tax rate of .2578 per \$100 assessed value.

We placed an item on the March meeting agenda under communications where we hope to provide additional feedback related to the proposed budget and the discussion on borrowing as a follow-up to the workshop. There're some items that will require direction in advance to the April meeting, in case any changes to are desired. The April meeting is the first opportunity for the Mayor and Council to vote on the proposed budget.

Quiet Resorts Fire and Ice Festival – Postponed one Week – Freezing Temperatures

As you know, the Fire and Ice Festival, organized by the Quiet Resorts Chamber of Commerce was postponed one week until the weekend of Feb 5th, and 6th. The Launch of the Historic Village in Ocean View IPA – with tastings and 4 pack sales (*complements of the Ocean View Brewing Company*), in Hall's Store was a success, raising \$1,352 for the mission of the village in 3 hours. Attendance was steady on Friday for this kickoff event and the beer garden on Saturday, even with frigid temperatures and high winds. The beer garden was moved indoors to

Hall's Store on Saturday as a result, providing much desired warmth! I think it's important to share a huge thank you to the **Ocean View Brewing Company and Master Brewer Taylor Smith** for their continued and generous support of the Town and our partners from the Historic Village! They have been amazing to work with. Attached please find the Community Impact Report associated with the event.



Snow Event Response – Feedback

At time of writing things have finally slowed down finally after the snow event of January 22nd through the 24th. We shared some of the feedback we received under communications. They are primarily positive messages. We did have some calls and emails of concern, and a few where the property owner(s) questioned our approach, decisions/actions or that of our contracted operators were they expressed disappointment. We attempted to respond to the concerns and address as able.

But I have to tell you – this storm all-be-it only 12 to 18 inches depending on who you talk to or where you were... was a tough one. The snowfall, winds, downed trees and wires caused Ken to call in our crews for safety reasons, and I thank him for making that decision, while most of us were in the comfort of our homes (albeit some without power). The power companies had to do the same. This caused us to get behind and then be faced with heavier snow to clear, which takes longer. Anyway, from my perspective the overall actions and performance of our employees

and contracted crews was impressive. Ocean View roads were passable sooner than most. The clean up went well into the next week. Some work to restore areas will wait until Spring.

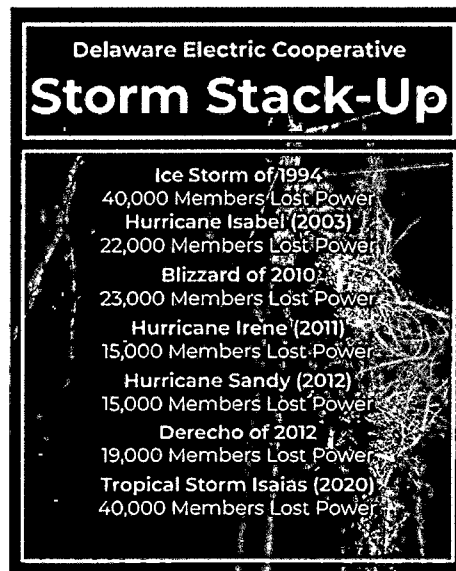
Lots of snow means the plows don't come by just once and that translates to driveways being plowed in a second or third time – sometimes after people already shoveled. This was, and is, has been, everywhere I've worked in this business the issue that people complain about. To that end, we're working on an education piece that we'll push out in the fall, in advance to possible snow events, so people, if they choose to pay attention, understand our process and have time to make plans in advance for their personal snow removal needs, including driveway aprons.

We're also considering how we might open lines of communication during the storm so that property owners don't attempt to communicate with plow operators in the midst of the storm or its aftermath. The focus of the operators addressing a storm event or its aftermath and clean-up needs to be on the work they've been instructed to do. Please stay tuned.

I pulled the below from the Delaware Electric Cooperative Facebook page since I thought it shed some light on the significance of the storm that hit our area. The Coop is one of the electric companies that provide service in our community. Those of you who were around for the winds from Sandy in 2012 might find it interesting.

Delaware Electric Cooperative Facebook Page 3/3/26

We told you last week that the blizzard of 2026 was historic — with 61,000 members out of power at the peak of the storm. It was the worst weather event we've experienced since the 1994 ice storm. To put just how severe this storm was into perspective, we put together the graphic below showing how many DEC-powered homes lost service during major storms over the last few decades. In the past 32 years, nothing comes close to what we experienced last week!



Joshua M. Freeman Furst Responde Awards

Congratulations Corporal Washington Alava, Town of Ocean View First Responder Award Recipient! And congratulations to all of the other first responders recognized during the luncheon.



Outreach and Engagement:

I participated in various meetings/engagements/events including those with the Historic Village in Ocean View as Board member and mtg. re Chicken Festival for 2027, Ocean View Brewing Company – Fire and Ice, PFM regarding upcoming workshop, IQ Fiber Introductory meeting, Night To Shine – Cheerleader as participants arrived, Sussex County Association of Towns Mtg. (presentation with Chief McLaughlin: Chief – Sussex County Rev Sharing Request discussed – Houck – State legislation improvement indemnification for locals), Town Assessor – re FY2027 Full Town Reassessment, Help Initiative meeting with SCVV, Wayland Consulting Group – Bob Wheately regarding updates to the Reserve Study, Town of Dagsboro regarding its consideration of selling its water system, Town of Delmar – Mayor and Chief meeting with Chief McLaughlin, Joshua M. Freeman First Responder Awards Ceremony – Congratulations Corporal Alava, Chamber of Commerce – Fire and Ice, Grant in Aid – local legislators and their staff, Playground vendor, Holiday Décor – Holiday Decorations – additional pricing new items , Mediacom – on behalf of property owners and annual meeting, DVHT – Health plan – regarding transition, DFIT – Workers Comp Trustee meeting/renewals, League of Local Governments – monthly meeting attendance, and Legislative Advocacy Committee participation, the Town Solicitor (ordinance, secular/non-secular, unattended display policy etc.), residents, and organizations.

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



IN THE FIRST STATE

\$51,000

IN CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

DRINK COMPETITION

250 Tickets Sold (Sold Out)
\$7,172 raised for
 Beebe Healthcare
 South Coastal Emergency
 Department & Cancer Center

TASTING TOUR

657 Tickets Sold (Sold Out)
\$20,000 raised for
 Sussex County Habitat for
 Humanity and Meals on
 Wheels (CHEER, Inc.)

TASTE OF BETHANY

217 Tickets Sold
\$4,500 raised for Bethany
 Beach Volunteer Fire Co.

SUNDAY BRUNCH

\$750 raised for
 Roxana Volunteer Fire Co.

MERCHANDISE

\$2,000 raised for
 Delaware State Parks

VFW CHICKEN DINNER

341 Meals Purchased
\$3,655 raised for
 Mason Dixon VFW Post 7234

HISTORY TRAIL KICK-OFF

\$1,328 raised for Historic
 Village in Ocean View

SALTED VINES

\$2,500 raised for
 Santa's Letters

KIDS' INFLATABLES

\$1,344 raised for John M.
 Clayton Elementary PTO

BEER GARDEN

\$828 raised for
 Beebe Healthcare
 South Coastal Emergency
 Department & Cancer Center

CHILI COOK-OFF

512 Tickets Sold (Sold Out)
\$6,650 raised for
 Millville Volunteer Fire Co.

BY THE NUMBERS

105 Sponsors & Partners
 39 Volunteers
 11 Beneficiaries
 8 Quiet Resorts™ Towns Represented

ICE FACTS

94 Sculptures X 232 Blocks
 = 69,600 Totals Pounds of Ice



OUT-OF-MARKET VISITS

BY ZIP CODE

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	YOY
19930	10,100	9,600	6,700	+0.9%
19945	8,200	7,400	6,500	+1.0%
19967	8,000	7,900	6,500	+5.3%
19970	9,600	9,400	7,500	+6.1%

MARKETING

PRINT

Business Report
 Coastal Point
 County Lines Magazine
 Delaware Beach Life
 Delaware Today Magazine
 Edible Delmarva
 Northern Virginia Magazine
 Southern Delaware Explorer
 South Jersey Magazine

TV

47ABC/WMDT

RADIO

97.1 The Wave
 Delaware 105.9

EMAIL

Constant Contact
 Delaware Today
 Forever Media

DIGITAL

Coastal Point
 Forever Media
 Northern Virginia Magazine

SOCIAL MEDIA ADS

6 Paid Campaigns

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

(JULY - FEBRUARY)

385,849 Views
 125,107 Reach
 4,047 Interactions
 7,115 Clicks
 11,740 Visits
 736 Follows
 419 Posts/Stories

E-BLAST STATS

331,786 Total Sends
 38% Average Open Rate
 5% Average Click Rate

DIGITAL AD STATS

383,842 Impressions
 47,627 Reach
 6,827 Clicks/Visits

12,860 GOOGLE MAP VIEWS

\$43,000 INVESTED LOCALLY

Including, but not limited to: Décor, Gear, Marketing,
 Merchandise, Entertainment, Rentals, Signage, & Supplies.

SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 29-31, 2027

@fireandicede fireandicede.com

