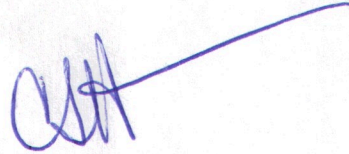


**TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE**

May 8, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager



SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of May 13, 2025

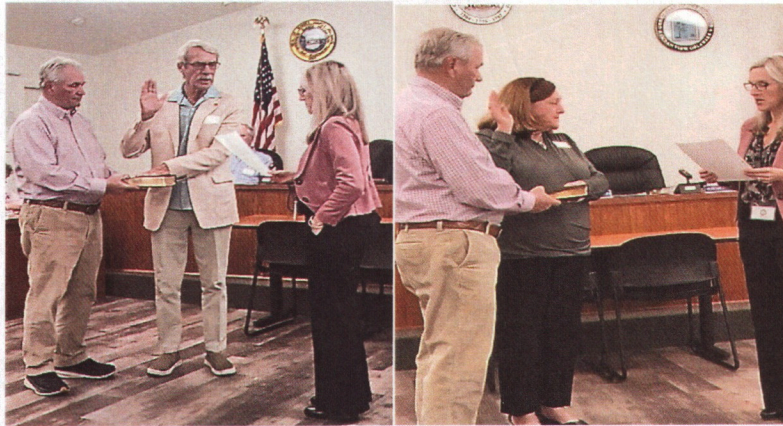
Golf Tournament – Benefiting Cops and Goblins

The original date for the fundraising Golf Tournament was postponed from April 7th to April 14th due to weather however the event went off without issue and with good participation, significant support from sponsors and reports of an enjoyable day! It was a true team effort lead exceptionally well by Corporal Burton. At writing the final tally for the event was awaiting a few invoices but it's my understanding the outcome exceeded our initial expectations. The committee that Officer Burton worked with really came together to put on a great event with a large amount of raffle items and baskets in a very short period of time! Thank you to all and especially all the members of the Police department and staff that helped!



Organizational Meeting Held – April 22nd

During the organizational meeting of April 22nd – Councilman Cobb and Councilwoman Twardzik were sworn into their second terms of office representing Districts 1 and 2 respectively. In addition, Councilman Walsh was voted by Council to continue as Mayor Pro-Tem. Congratulations and appreciation for their service!



Charter Change Items

I spent a good deal of time reviewing information from the Town Solicitor on various items related to a Charter Change and making recommendations. It is our hope to be in a position to share the details with Council at its June meeting and submit the Charter change request to the Legislature before the end of the session, however it seems unlikely they will be addressed this year. Topics at this time include procurement, change of term for BOA members, procedure for addressing Council term limits in certain circumstances, and possibly public safety response to unincorporated areas and possibly Council pay.

Start of Fiscal Year 2026

May 1 began the Town's FY26 Budget year and with that reestablishment of various recurring contractual agreements for services. I have an item on the agenda seeking Council approval of these necessities to ensure full awareness in advance of any necessary Charter Change, to more clearly align our Charter and Code with the Town's long term practices.

In addition, staff are in the process of confirming health benefit selections in association with our participation in the State of Delaware Health plans that renew July 1st. Finance Director Dawn Parks planned and implemented an Employee Open Enrollment event with representatives available from various companies where employees may participate through payroll deduction in a health savings account, Legal Shield, and/or Aflac. In addition, she and Town Clerk Donna Schwartz were on hand to assist in comparing health insurance options and costs. I commend Dawn for her efforts to ensure our employees have the opportunity to fully consider and vet these other benefit options we make available to them.

Launch of Two Analysis Supported in the FY26 Budget – we also participated in initial kick off meetings/calls regarding the Police Compensation Analysis and the IACP Risk Analysis. The appropriate staff will continue to engage with the consultants and bring the findings back to Mayor and Council for discussion and possible action.

Property Tax Bills and the Town Newsletter will be mailed out the end of this month.

DNREC – Approval of Grant Modification

I am happy to report that this week I was informed that my request to modify a 2024 grant from the Outdoor Recreation Parks and Trails program from funding an outdoor classroom/meeting space at the Berzins Natural Area to the development of a pavilion at the site. This request became necessary when we found out that our DelDOT TAP grant was funding the outdoor classroom. The grant is a matching grant of \$40,000.

Door Access Grant Funding Released - DEMA

Our grant from DEMA that supported the expansion of our door access system within 201 Central was paused in recent months due to Federal funds being withheld from the state (DEMA). We were advised not to move forward, even after having finalized the approvals until DEMA could guarantee their ability to pay the Town. This week that approval was granted and we have now issued the PO. I am now awaiting response for the 2025 funds of which I have submitted the final phase of the project that will include the Maintenance facility.

Town Road – Update

As you are aware we have spent time in the past addressing concerns of local businesses for the condition of Town Road. Despite the name, the roadway is not a Town of Ocean View owned street. Its poor condition does detract from the commercial area and the Town however the ownership of the street was left in limbo in the 80's when the developer failed to turn over the street to the Town and so far, has been found to no longer be in business. I have made a request to the Town Solicitor to advise us of the process to take the roadway – so that we can have full understanding and consider this option.

We have met previously with the adjacent property owners, but there was lack of strong support to assist the Town in making the necessary improvements. More recently Town Planning and Development Director Ken Cimino and I have determined that the roadway might benefit from creating a Street Improvement District, and research on that has begun. The catch is, we can't begin such an effort unless we own the road, and there would also need to be support from all adjacent property owners, which I am not sure we will get.

Senator Hocker and Representative Gray have also been approached in regard to funding assistance to improve the road and its drainage, and at the time they seemed to want to be supportive at some level, but again ownership would be necessary, and all subject to funds being available.

Long story short – this long term concern will be brought back to you with a plan for how we might address it, for conversation and ultimately a decision for how to move forward – or not. The one thing I know is, if not us (the Town of Ocean View) then who else will address this problem?

Water Infrastructure Sale - Remaining Funds

I spent a good deal of time preparing the initial framework for our discussion regarding the use of the final remaining funds once all aspects of the sale are completed (closed April 1, 2025). I look forward to our public discussions on this topic hopefully by the end of the summer.

Outreach and Engagement:

I participated in various meetings/engagements/events including those with the Historic Village in Ocean View as Board member, Indian River School District – SRO Agreement, The FOP – Golf Tournament fundraiser for Cops and Goblins, Senator Hocker and Representative Gray regarding various Bills before the legislature that are of concern, DelDOT regarding Central Avenue, DEMA – grant for door access, PFM regarding launch of Compensation study, IACP regarding launch of Risk analysis, and various other vendors and contractors, the Town Solicitor, and residents, organizations or contractors in response to requests etc.