

TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE

September 4, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager



SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of September 9, 2025

Independent Audit

Our independent audit began on July 14th and concluded later that week in house. You will be presented with the final outcome of the audit at your meeting of September 9th, which we are happy to say is very positive.

Concerts

The last two free concerts of the year (Hot Sauce and the Funsters) were lots of fun and attendance was very high. We have received some feedback about holding some additional concerts in the fall and will consider our options for next year. We share a note of thanks to our partners from Boy Scout troop 281 and Bonkey's Ice Cream for being there to add a refreshment component to the evenings.

Fire and Ice

Ocean View will again partner with the Quiet Resorts Chamber of Commerce by serving as a sponsoring Town/venue for this annual event. The event will be held January 30th through February 1st, 2026, with activities in John West Park on Friday and Saturday. Additional information will be shared next month as we fine tune our offerings with the Chamber. The theme of the event this year is "In the First State" with a nod to Delaware's celebration of turning 250 in 2026!

Delaware Valley Health Trust-

Finance Director Dawn Parks and I are working with the Delaware Valley Health Trust (DVHT) to evaluate its offerings and determine if moving to this public entity "pooled" health coverage model might be an option for the Town while providing significantly similar or increased benefits at a lower cost. Once our initial evaluation effort is completed, if it appears to be a viable option (several Delaware Towns are now with DVHT) we will engage employees and provide information sessions prior to making any recommendations. If a decision is made to move in this direction vs. maintaining the State of Delaware health plans a start date will align with our budget process and start of FY27 next May.

The Delaware Valley Health Trust provides comprehensive healthcare coverage to over 24,000 public entity employees and their families throughout Pennsylvania and Delaware. Our risk-

sharing pool combines the advantages and flexibility of self-insurance with the safety and predictability of a fully insured program.

Since 1999, Health Trust members have enjoyed long-term premium stability, superior member service, first-class claims adjudication, and a wide array of exclusive value-added benefits anchored by robust wellness programs. Even better, expert trust management has consistently kept average rate renewals in the single digits while simultaneously dedicating over \$86.7 million to the membership through our Rate Stabilization Fund. Premiums have been further reduced by over \$28.2 million through application of multi-trust discounts. The Health Trust is over 160 members strong and growing.

Appraisal Services

I wanted to make you aware that Fred Pearson of Pearsons Appraisal Services sold his firm to Vision Government Solutions. Mr. Pearson remains employed by the new company and continues to service our appraisal needs. Vision Government Solutions has been in business for some time completing mass appraisal work and is the largest appraisal company in the United States. All pricing for our appraisal needs continue to meet those awarded with his contract. If at any time that changes or we determine the need to issue another RFP we will bring the matter to the attention of Mayor and Council.

DeLea Founders Insurance Trust (DFIT)

I'm happy to share that our public entity pooled worker compensation trust DFIT that represents over 30 towns and cities in Delaware, was awarded the Theo Award for its innovation and solution driven program. The Theo Award was named for President Teddy Roosevelt who championed the 1st workers compensation legislation and DFIT has worked with Ocean View (an original member) and other members communities to provide workplace safety training programs, manage claims and costs while allowing Towns to share in the risk avoidance rewards. I currently serve as a Trustee on the board representing Ocean View.

Police Compensation Study and OVPD, International Association of Chiefs of Police Risk Analysis

These efforts are ongoing, and we hope to be in a position to share findings and possibly recommendations by November.

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, Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT), Scout Troop 281 and Bonkey's Ice Cream – event support, Indian River School District, PFM regarding ongoing Compensation study, IACP regarding ongoing Risk analysis, International City Manager's Association, Millville Volunteer Fire Company, HVAC vendor - repairs, various performers and vendors associated with community events, Chamber of Commerce DVIT and ACLU and various other vendors and contractors, the Town Solicitor, and residents, organizations or contractors in response to requests etc.