

TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE

June 22, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager
Kenneth McLaughling, Chief of Police
Dawn Parks, Finance Director



SUBJECT: Recommendation for Proactive Ocean View Police Department Succession Planning Support for FY2027 and FY2028- FY2030 Officer Recruitments and/or Associated COPS Grant Application

Background

In association with anticipated Ocean View Police Department retirements expected to take place over the next several years, and in the interest of maintaining well-trained and pro-active/available staffing levels during any upcoming transition, succession planning is now deemed necessary.

It should be noted up front that our succession plan as described herein is based on our best available information at time of writing. Any modifications to this plan that become necessary in association with updated and “actual” notice from officers or other findings/occurrences will be brought to the attention of Council immediately.

The time of overlap between departing and newly hired officers cannot be fully identified at this time, although we can confirm that the training and initial onboarding of new officers typically takes one year. As such, we will manage any overlap periods to the best of our ability and with the best interests of the Town of Ocean View and its citizens in mind.

FY2027 Officer Recruitment Effort

It’s been deemed appropriate to begin an officer recruitment effort during this fiscal year (FY2027) to allow for recruitment and all of its associated requirements, hiring, participation in an upcoming academy, completion of the academy, and the active duty training period. This effort would be for the recruitment of one police officer as a replacement for an officer expected to retire effective August/September of 2027.

Our plan would be to begin the recruitment now to allow for the replacement officer to have completed all necessary steps and be available for service upon the departure of the first of possibly 4 anticipated retirements.

Funds to assist with a successful recruitment were not included in the FY2027 Budget although they've been identified to be available from our Unassigned Fund balance to cover the hiring of one officer in 2026 (our FY2027 and current budget year). The value of this funding has a range of between \$120,836 (new officer, attending an academy with family benefits, etc.) to \$132,818 (certified officer, with family benefits, etc.).

FY2027 COPS Grant Funding Application Effort (recruitment funding support for the hiring of 2 Officers in FY2029)

It's been deemed appropriate to apply in July of 2026 for funding support of 2 replacement/succession planning police officers, in association with the anticipated retirement of 2 to 3 additional officers in 2028 (FY2029 budget year). This grant application is due in July of 2026 and notice of award will not be made until Spring of 2027 (our FY2028 budget year). A COPS Grant cannot supplant existing officer salaries or previously budgeted officer positions. It is valued at \$175,000 per officer paid out over 3 years, or at \$58,333 each of the first 3 years of employment per officer successfully hired.

As such, the recruitment for 2 new officers could not commence until Spring of 2027 (our FY2028 - when award notice is expected) if awarded the grant funding; however, the balance of the anticipated Town cost for year 1 of 3 will be proactively included in the FY2028 Operating Budget, that would be effective May 1, 2027, and subsequently align closely with the award notice. Failure to obtain the grant funds would require additional recommendations/consideration by the Town at that time.

The value of these 2 officer recruitments is approximately \$120,836 each less the \$58,333 each (if our 3 year payout of COPS grant funds is awarded) or approximately \$62,503 per officer, per year FY2028, FY2029 and FY2030.

For now, the support we're seeking in regard to this recruitment effort is limited to making application to the COPS grant in July of 2026 (this month). Plus, the understanding that if you support the application, the balance of the anticipated officer salaries will be proactively included in the Town's FY2028 Operating Budget.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Mayor and Council authorize the Town Manager to:

Begin recruitment for 1 new Ocean View Police Officer (new recruit or certified as deemed appropriate) before October 2026, with funding for the position supported by the Town's Unassigned Fund balance during FY2027. The value of which is expected to range from \$120,886 to \$132,818; and

It is also therefore recommended that the Mayor and Council authorize the Town Manager via Chief of Police Kenneth McLaughlin to:

Make application to the State of Delaware COPS grant for 2 officers, understanding that notice of award will not be made until Spring of 2027, and that the balance funds required per each officer (if awarded) will be included proactively in the Town's FY2028 budget and maintained in the FY2029 and FY2030 Operating Budgets.

The Following Motion if so inclined by a member of Council would support a vote in favor of the above:

I make a motion to support the Town Manager's Recommendation as outlined in her memo of June 22, 2026, for proactive OVPD Succession Planning regarding immediate recruitment for one officer, application in July of 2026 for (2) COPS grant supported officer positions, and proactive funding in the FY2028 Budget as necessary.