



TOWN OF OCEAN RIDGE

6450 NORTH OCEAN BOULEVARD, OCEAN RIDGE, FLORIDA 33435

www.oceanridgeflorida.com

(561) 732-2635 ♦ FAX (561) 737-8359

Town Manager's Annual Report – 2021

Major focus on stormwater and sea level rise causing tidal and flooding issues continues to prevail as we are a barrier island community where our drainage systems, seasonal tides, high groundwater and rainfall accumulations drive future critical infrastructure improvements. Heavy rain and “King Tides” cause system overtopping and roadway flooding in low-lying areas until tides recede. Town infrastructure is continually maintained and repaired so stormwater mitigation can best occur. Our Town Engineer and Public Works Department identified the major concerns and priority options for future remedy and investment, and those items were included in the FY21 and FY22 budgets. The Town remains dedicated to increasing maintenance to all stormwater structures and tidal valve improvements that will aid in localized flooding problems significantly. Camera and repair operations have helped us focus on the most critical needs for mitigating measures.

To that end, the Town partnered with the County along with six other southeastern municipalities to form the Coastal Resilience Partnership of Southeast Palm Beach County (CRP) to foster collaboration in climate adaptation planning, recognizing that our communities share similar physical, geographic, and social characteristics. The CRP received a federal grant to partially fund a sea-level rise vulnerability assessment that was concluded in 2021. The vulnerability assessment will be a valuable tool for Ocean Ridge as we move forward with identifying solutions for our continued nuisance flooding, beach erosion, and algal bloom challenges. The CRP is once again applying for a grant through the Resilient Florida Grant Program in order to expand the analysis to include the NOAA intermediate low and intermediate high projections to meet the requirements of State Statutes. The new analysis will update storm surge and tidal flooding, including new FEMA maps, and rainfall-induced flooding using future rainfall for all critical assets in the entire study area. Project outcomes will include a technical memorandum detailing the analyses and summarizing new findings to comply with the requirements in State Statutes, GIS Data and Metadata for delivery to FDEP, and an update to the software used for the analysis with extended access for an additional year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be one of our biggest challenges for the second year in a row. With the state of emergency, our focus has been to ensure a safe and healthy workforce and communicate with our residents what all this means for their service delivery and the Town's preparedness. While the main focus has been employee and resident health and safety, we were also challenged with assessing the financial implications to the Town. With the uncertainty surrounding the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes more difficult to ascertain how the Town will be impacted. Our Town will continue to be challenged by the current financial woes, short staffing not only within our own staff, but also with our contractors and vendors, along with supply shortages, but I am confident that we will come through this pandemic in a strong position, as I believe our financial methods will bode well for the current situation and into the future. Marshaling our strategies, resources and actions will help Ocean Ridge emerge stronger from this crisis, as this is an opportunity to learn from what we have done in the past and how it shapes the future.

I'm excited to announce that after a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Town will hold the Annual Holiday Event on Friday, December 3rd from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a visit from Santa and other fun activities for the kids! Due to the pandemic and our focus on safety, the event will be smaller scale and held outdoors this year. We are also planning our second annual socially distanced Cruisin' Santa event on Saturday, December 11th beginning at 3:00 p.m. where residents may view Santa's parade from the safety of their own driveway. Stay tuned for details coming soon on the Town's website!

The Town continues to explore options to potentially convert from individual septic systems to a sewer system in the Town. We were unsuccessful in obtaining a Planning Grant for Septic to Sewer Conversion last year; however, our Grants Administrator is working on a second submission and we are hopeful that this new grant opportunity will be successful.

Investment in potable water infrastructure improvements along A1A has been planned by Town Staff and committed to by the Town Commission utilizing federal stimulus American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding. We also continued a major overhaul of the fire hydrant infrastructure in town in order to keep our residents safe. Capital investment in the Town over several years will continue to improve the entire street grid, beach crossovers and drainage capacities as we go. Our pest control services for no-see-um and mosquito treatments and iguana control services continue into the next fiscal year as well. Other beautification and infrastructure upgrades around town continue to be identified, prioritized and funded.

The Town's 2019-'20 (FY20) approved audit was submitted to the State and was declared in great shape by our Auditors! Year-end closing and beginning prep for audit services for the 2020-'21 Fiscal Year (FY21) are under way and will be submitted to the State in 2022. The Town remains very fiscally sound and deploys best practices of its finances under all state and GASB standards. The Town's Reserve Funds of \$6,282,898 at FY20 year-end are approximately 71% of our FY22 annual operating budget of \$8,826,440 and well within recommended ranges by the Town Auditors.



TOWN OF OCEAN RIDGE

6450 NORTH OCEAN BOULEVARD, OCEAN RIDGE, FLORIDA 33435

www.oceanridgeflorida.com

(561) 732-2635 ♦ FAX (561) 737-8359

The FY22 budget continues good management policies and procedures established under legislative direction and priorities of the Town Commission, and set by Town Administration to move our workforce forward in shared visions to serve our residents with a high quality of life. The mil rate adopted by the Town Commission in FY21 remained the same rate of 5.35 as it has been for many years, and the Town Commission voted to increase that rate for FY22 to 5.50 in order to maintain our current level of service while aggressively addressing capital projects and preserving the reserve fund.

This fiscal year, the Building Department issued 745 building permits as of September 30th. The Building Official and his team will continue to offer enhanced building department services to the residents, including the addition of a new Building Official Forum that is held on the first Monday of each month at 5 p.m. at Town Hall. Forum topics are listed on the Town's website and we encourage the public to attend these informative sessions. In addition, town staff works with a contracted professional Town Planner and Zoning Official to update our critical issues related to the Town's Land Development codes.

Annual Rental Registration is required for anyone renting their home. This registration program provides an extra measure of health, safety and welfare in the Town. Renewal forms will be sent out with a \$35 fee assessed, which covers all of the rental units/properties registered to the property owner. Forms are also available on our website or at Town Hall. Short-term rentals under 30 days are prohibited by Town Code. Code Enforcement will cite residents that do not come into voluntary compliance. Registered rental properties may also be subject to Tourist, Bed and Sales Tax registration requirements with the County. Remember, illegal rentals of properties can jeopardize Homestead Exemption status of the subject property.

Public Safety and Community Policing remains a priority for the Town. In August, we bid farewell to our Police Chief, Hal Hutchins, and wished him the best during his retirement. We welcomed our new Police Chief, Richard Jones, who was promoted from within. Please join us in congratulating them both! The Police Department posts monthly reports on the Town's Website: www.oceanridgeflorida.com. In addition to a statistical breakdown of Calls for Service posted on the Town's Website, specific major incidents are outlined and crime prevention/safety tips are provided in the Town's monthly newsletter. Total Police Department CAD Logged Events for FY21 were 39,965. In comparison, the number of logged CAD events for FY20 was 41,371. The Town continues to contract with the City of Boynton Beach for Fire/Emergency Medical Services. The contract was updated and renewed in FY20 with an automatic 4% annualized increase over the 12-year term. From October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021 the Boynton Beach Fire/Rescue Department responded to 221 calls for service in Ocean Ridge; 153 were EMS related, including 8 traffic crashes with injuries. Last year (2019/2020) there were 246 calls for Service; 138 were EMS related, including 10 traffic crashes with injuries. Prior year comparisons include: 2018/2019 – 149 (111 were EMS); 2017/2018-158 (110 were EMS); 2016/2017 – 171 (101 were EMS); 2015/2016 – 203 (125 were EMS); 2014/2015 – 249 (172 were EMS); 2013/2014 – 259 (201 were EMS); 2012/2013 – 220 (144 were EMS); 2011/2012 – 165 (93 were EMS); 2010/2011 – 226 (139 were EMS); and 2009/2010 – 222 (139 were EMS).

Town Staff has been working diligently with the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Commission over the past few years to tighten up the Town's Code of Ordinances. Town Ordinances passed in FY21 are:

- No. 2021-01 – Demolition and Construction Timelines
- No. 2021-02 – Decreasing Two-Story Building Height when FEMA Regs are Implicated and Adjusting Parapet Height
- No. 2021-03 – Allowing Dune Crossovers & Stairways East of the 1979 CCCL Without a Variance
- No. 2021-04 – Addressing Park Hours
- No. 2021-05 – Changing the Qualifying Period for Candidates for Town Commissioner

The Town's official website at www.oceanridgeflorida.com is updated regularly and provides a wealth of information such as meeting agendas and minutes, newsletters, Town Codes and important announcements and schedules. The Town also began an emergency alert system a couple of years ago through Civic Ready, and we ask all residents to participate in order to receive emergency alerts regarding upcoming storms as well as meeting notices, etc. Anyone interested in receiving these alerts should sign up by using the link provided on the website, or by contacting staff at Town Hall for assistance. This is truly one of the best ways to stay connected with happenings in Town.

The Commission and Staff for the Town of Ocean Ridge wish everyone a happy & healthy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Stevens, Town Manager & Finance Director