

Municipal Update

Dear Ocean Gate Residents,

May 2025

As you can imagine, we are very busy preparing for the summer season and all the activities we have planned. As in the past, this update is divided into the six standing Council committee's as well as the Mayor/Business Administrator. Also enclosed is the **2025 Events Schedule** and an **Overview of our Borough Police Department**

PUBLIC SAFETY: Council President McGrath, 2025 Chairperson

Our 4 seasonal Bike Officers have been hired and are currently in training at the police academy.

Two of our police officers have received training as HLEO (Humane Law Enforcement Officers). We have a shared service with Berkeley Township for Animal Control services but this will allow our police force to now make impoundment decisions in cases of abuse or a dog attack. We have also updated our Animal Ordinance to include stricter vicious dog language and procedures.

Our Police Department generates income into two forfeiture accounts. The income generated comes from being included in law enforcement efforts, whether in Ocean Gate or part of a task force, that confiscates cars, guns, money etc. from criminal arrests. These efforts can generate significant sums. The money generated has some use restrictions but it covers most of the department costs other than payroll. This is extremely helpful budgeting for the department.

We have included a separate insert with this mailing outlining our Borough Police department. We are very proud of our Police services to the community and think it important for all residents to understand the extent of their efforts in our community.

In order to prepare for an emergency, the Mayor, Council President McGrath, OEM committee, Police and Fire departments and our new CERT certified residents will stage a drill simulating a major incident in the Borough. There are at least two events each year, 4th of July and Ocean Gate Day, where there are significant numbers of people in crowds in the Borough. The drill is to make sure the command structure and all responsibilities are understood, all radios are able to communicate with all appropriate local, county and state agencies and all necessary equipment is in good working order and readily accessible. There are many moving parts in an emergency and we want to prepare as best we can.

Municipal Alliance – The Municipal Alliance will be chaired by Council President McGrath and coordinator Detective Rich Zonin. They have many events scheduled this year with the most exciting new event being a BMX bike show scheduled June 17 by Mease EMS Park.

FINANCE Councilman Jim Fry, 2025 Chairperson

We are still working on our 2025 Municipal budget. As outlined in a special mailing last fall, the Borough continues to struggle based on the past administration's poor fiscal management and the budget restrictions of the State. We are reviewing options and will address the current financial situation in a separate letter as we did last year. We believe we have a good plan and are in the process of putting the pieces together.

We have been told that Ocean Gate School and Central Regional 2025-2026 budgets have been submitted to the state and both contain an increase. We have not heard from the County regarding their 2025 Budget.

Water meters – We are making great progress with the installation of our water meters. We still have 55 homes that have not contacted us for installation. These homes have already received two (2) fines and eventually a lien will be placed on the house. If you have contacted us but it has not been installed, you are not receiving fines. We made our first remote reading of the meters and 100% of the meters responded. Your first water bill based on your meter reading will be October 1st.

PUBLIC UTILITIES **Councilman Russ Ernst, 2025 Chairperson**

We held the kick-off meeting with our Engineering firm, Collier Engineering, for the refurbishing of the inside and outside of the water tower. We are also upgrading to a new water filtration system as well as some other improvements. The project is being funded by a \$2,000,000 loan from the Infrastructure Bank of New Jersey. We used approximately \$700,000 of the loan for the new water meters and the balance is being put towards the water tower. The loan is a Principal Forgiveness loan which means it can be used for all costs and is 100% forgiven (FREE). The project will take about a year and we will obtain our Boroughs' water supply from Aqua when the time comes to shut down the tower. Aqua is the Boroughs back up water supplier and we are already connected to the Aqua system. Your water pressure or bills will not be affected.

We are upgrading the emergency warning system at our sewer pumping station located at Anglesea and E. Lakewood. Our Water/Sewer Operator has recommended that we have our sewer system cleaned out and TV inspected on a scheduled basis. We are in the process of obtaining quotes for both Wet Well and Jet cleaning of lines.

BUILDINGS AND ASSETS **Joella Nicastro, 2025 Chairperson**

The replacement of the western end of the boardwalk is underway. The funding for the work had to be found since it is a VERY expensive replacement and not just a repair. It is an extensive project since it has to be rebuilt from the pilings up. The gas and water lines under the boardwalk have been marked out and the area has been surveyed. The bid package has been prepared and is ready to go out.

There have been many fixes and improvements made to Adrian Hall. A big thank you to the Garden Club, Social Club and Historical Society who all chipped in and purchased new melamine dinnerware and flatware for the Hall.

RECREATION **Mark Haug, 2025 Chairperson**

We have added a band this year for the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend! Since this is the traditional kickoff to summer weekend, we thought it would be fun to add some entertainment!!

We have two movies again this summer, and yes, one of them will be at the Anglesea Pier! We have also scheduled a movie for Oct 5th, which is the night of the Bonfire. We will be showing " Nightmare Before Christmas"

Don't forget that we are **bringing back the Car show again this fall!** It is scheduled for October 18th, at Mease EMS Park. The Fire Department will also have a beer tent and bands starting at 2:00. More details will follow.

HEALTH, WELFARE and the Environment

Rick Zieser, 2025 Chairperson

As mentioned above, the Council has updated the Vicious Dogs section of the Borough Animal Ordinance in order to give the police the ability to deal with dangerous animals in the Borough as well as any incidents that occur. We have had a few incidents and we needed to address the issue more thoroughly.

Councilman Zieser is working on a plan to establish "Parking" areas along the beach for Kayaks, Canoes, Hobie Cats, etc. The parking areas will contain posts with eyebolts for securing the watercraft.

When placing your moorings, please take into account the swing radius of the boat when moored. Boats that "swing" into no parking areas will be ticketed.

MAYOR

Bob Curtin

In the December 2024 Municipal Update, we indicated that we would be introducing a new organizational chart of responsibilities. As stated, the Borough needs to be managed and administered by professional employees who span the election cycle of Mayors and Council people. Consistency and institutional knowledge of the day-to-day management of the town must reside with the municipal staff.

As of April 28th, we have promoted Ileana Vazquez-Gallipoli to assume the duties of Business Administrator. Ileana has worked for the Borough for 22 years in multiple positions and is uniquely qualified to assume this roll. She will still retain her position of Municipal Clerk and add the Administrator responsibilities. We have promoted Emily Lord to Deputy Municipal Clerk. She will increase her hours to 40, and assume many of Ileana's Clerk and Registrar duties. Emily has also started classes to obtain her Municipal Clerk certification. We are fortunate to have such highly competent individuals as part of our team and they will continue to do an outstanding job for the Borough.

Since January 1, 2023, the Borough has received a little over \$4,000,000 in Grants and Forgivable (free) loans. Almost everything being improved or added in the Borough is as a result of these monies.

NEW 2025 LRIG \$90,000 grant – This is a recreational improvement grant we received as part of the funding for the planned improvements to the Mease EMS Park. The improvements include a large cement pad for the portable County stage, chairs and tables, electric service, and public bathrooms in the old EMS station house. These improvements will allow us to hold our Borough events in the park while still maintaining the park as open space.

NEW 2025 \$40,000 CDBG grant - This grant will be used for ADA improvements to the EMS Park as well.

Credit Card Acceptance – By July, we will be able to accept credit cards for payments. Residents can currently pay their tax, water and sewer bills by credit card online but not in person. In July you will be able to pay for any financial transaction with the Borough in person at the Municipal Building. We will also be adding an ATM machine in the Municipal Building and at the Wildwood Pier comfort station.

The exercise equipment for the bike path was shipped the week of April 21st and is probably starting to be installed as you read this letter. We have installed cameras along the path to monitor the exercise pads as well as the playground, basketball courts and Pickleball/Tennis courts.

Ordinance Codification – We have completed the most time-consuming portion of the codification process. The Codification committee has reviewed ALL of the Borough ordinances. We made 119 changes, both large and small, completely updated 9 ordinances and eliminated 5 unnecessary ordinances. We submitted our portion of the process on April 15th. The next step is for General Code to make all the updates and changes and send us the final draft. Once this draft is reviewed, it will be placed on the agenda for approval. Once approved you will be able to visit our website and always have the most up to date version of our ordinances at your fingertips. This was a HUGE undertaking but all ordinances (some dated to 1940!) are consolidated and up to date.

Stone Harbor – Two blocks of Stone Harbor will shortly be re-milled and re-paved.

County Road improvements – The County has several roads in the Borough scheduled for improvement. Since the county schedules change, we will not list specific roads or times in this letter.

Anglesea/Newport/Naragansette road improvement – The surveying for this project will begin this month. The scope of the project is being modified. We are applying for funding from the IBank Clean Water fund to install a pump station and closed loop storm drain system. A similar system was installed by the County on Long Beach Island. This system has made a huge difference to the local flooding in the area addressed.

School Regionalization Study – The school Regionalization study initiated by the Ocean Gate School and Central Regional will be delivered in June. Please look out for any announcements from the school board regarding the presentation of findings.

Soliciting and Peddling – As part of the codification, we reviewed our Peddling and Solicitation Ordinance. We are not legally able to totally prohibit soliciting by contractors. We are going to be instituting a “No Knock” Ordinance. Vendors must obtain a permit and will be handed a list of opt-out addresses. The Borough will provide residents who decide to opt-out, a “No Knock” sign to display by the front door. Please contact the Borough if this is violated. Please ask to see the permit should someone come to your door. Religious groups, veterans and politicians are not subject to the ordinance.

As he did last year, the Mayor will be in front of the Post Office to meet with residents, on;

June 7th July 12th Aug 9th from 9:00 – 11:00.

Our Council Meetings are the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, @ 7:00. Please join us in person or watch via livestream broadcast on our website, www.oceangatenjgov.com.

Follow the Borough on its’ **Facebook Page**, **Borough of Ocean Gate Municipal Page**

Bob Curtin
Mayor

Jim McGrath
Council President

Jim Fry
Councilman

Joella Nicastro
Councilwomen

Jim Fry
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Russell Ernst
Councilman

Rick Zieser
Councilman