TOWN OF OCEAN RIDGE · FLORIDA · 1931

Town Manager/Finance Director
Apply by March 24, 2023

Lying between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway in southeast Florida, is a slice of heaven – the Town of Ocean Ridge. This beautiful barrier island community stretches along Highway A1A for 2.7 miles and is just east of Boynton Beach in Palm Beach County. Unlike many of the cities and towns located on the Florida coast, Ocean Ridge is a small community that cherishes its quiet solitude, relaxed atmosphere, picturesque sunrises, and unspoiled coastal landscape. In fact, it has no commercial property within its boundaries. Whether you're looking to take a dip in the ocean, fish, snorkel, or simply collect seashells, Ocean Ridge has it all!

Ocean Ridge has a name just generic enough that it could be anywhere near a large body of water, and it's a point of local pride that most people who live elsewhere in the Palm Beaches have no idea where it lies. Most of Ocean Ridge lies on the main barrier island, but it includes three inlet-side islands which is an ideal location for boat owners with private docks. On the ocean side, lie miles of gorgeous, unencumbered beach and healthy dunes

Two county parks and two large natural areas comprise almost 20% of the Town's land which is environmentally sensitive and well protected. The Town places a high value on its maritime hammock, mangrove swamps and beach dune vegetation. Most recently, the Town purchased nine acres of submerged mangroves to add to its unique inventory of preservation and conservation lands. These mangrove areas serve as a nursery and feeding habitat for fish and wildlife. One of the natural mangrove areas offers a walking trail as well as a two-story observation platform, educational kiosk and daytime dockage. These areas are accessible by boat, bicycle and foot only.

Residents and visitors enjoy jogging, walking, and surfing along the coastal beaches. On the north end of Town, Palm Beach County's Inlet Park is a serene place with lush tropical vegetation and blue water. You can walk across the street out onto the long pier to watch pelicans "dive bombing" for fish in the ocean and try your hand at reeling in a big one yourself. A jetty is open 24 hours, making this an excellent spot for boaters and jet skiers to dart to the ocean or Intracoastal Waterway.

With access via wooded trail, Ocean Ridge Hammock Park offers a secluded, unguarded beach area for swimming and saltwater fishing. The Oceanfront Park (operated by Boynton Beach) has lifeguards on duty every day from 9 am to 5 pm, with designated surfing and skim board areas located at the north and south end of the beach. Beach wheelchairs are available, and a Mobi-Mat provides access to the sand for wheelchairs and strollers. The Turtle Café offers a variety of food and snacks, and picnic areas are equipped with grills, tables, and restrooms. A playground includes a tot area with a fitness area for adults nearby. All in all, Ocean Ridge is a tropical paradise with outdoor recreation opportunities galore.

Approximately 40% of the properties in Town are single family homes while the rest are condominiums. Both are pricey. The good news is the manager is not required to live in the community. The median home value here is $1,205,000 compared to the median home value in the surrounding county of $320,000 ($277,796 nationally). The least expensive properties currently on the market are two bedroom, two bath 1,100 square foot condominiums listed at approximately $700,000. In fact, last month a developer paid $29 million for a sixty year old building of 22 studio and one-bedroom apartments. They were not interested in the structure, but rather the unobstructed view of the blue water just steps away.

Although Ocean Ridge does not have any schools within the town limits, excellent education is readily available nearby. Many of the public schools in Palm Beach County are high-performing and A-rated. In fact, among Florida's seven large school districts, only Palm Beach and Miami-Dade earned a letter grade of "A." Several excellent private schools are also located nearby. For higher education, Palm Beach State College is very close. A number of other universities (including Florida Atlantic, Nova Southeastern, Palm Beach Atlantic, Keiser University, Barry, Florida International and the University of Miami) are nearby.

What makes Ocean Ridge special is its residents. They are an eclectic group of friendly people that work together and help each other. They love their slice of paradise, value their community, and would not live anywhere else. The crime rate is very, very low, and violent crime is virtually unheard of. Most crimes are committed by non-residents and involve petty theft from unlocked cars and properties. The Town has its own dispatch unit and employs new crime fighting technology, including cameras throughout the Town. Since a new police chief was appointed last August, a proactive policing initiative has been adopted and the crime rate is decreasing even further. Residents receive an exceptionally high level of Community Policing and are highly supportive of their dispatch and police forces.

One of Ocean Ridge's major attributes is its proximity to everything. You can reach Palm Beach International Airport in 16 minutes, downtown West Palm Beach with its nightlife in 18 minutes, Fort Lauderdale in 40 minutes and Miami in an hour. For a wide range of entertainment (including Broadway musicals, concerts and individual performers), visit the Kravis Center in West Palm Beach or Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale. The Norton Gallery of Art in West Palm Beach

is very well-regarded, and a variety of art galleries can be found in nearby Lake Worth Beach and Delray Beach. For shopping, stop at the Boca Raton, Boynton Beach and Wellington Malls. Other "can't miss" attractions are the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Lion Country Safari, Loggerhead Marinelife Center, Rapids Water Park, Palm Beach Zoo, Palm Beach Science Museum, and The Morikami Museum & Japanese Gardens. Most are within an hour's drive.

If it is theme parks you desire, Orlando is about three hours to the northwest. There you can choose from Disney World (the Magic Kingdom, Hollywood, Studios, Animal Kingdom, Epcot Center, and two water parks), Universal Studios (along with its Islands of Adventure and Volcano Baywater Park), and SeaWorld. Or you can visit Legoland in Winter Haven.

If you enjoy sports, the area boasts a number of college teams, probably the most notable being those at the University of Miami. Professional teams are found in Miami – the home of the NFL's Dolphins, the NBA's Heat, MLB's Marlins, and MLS's Inter Miami (soccer) – and in Sunrise – the home of the NHL's Panthers. Minor league baseball is played 30 minutes away in Jupiter and an hour away in Port St. Lucie. MLB's Nationals conduct spring training in West Palm Beach, the Marlins in Jupiter and the Mets in Port St. Lucie.

If you like to travel, aside from nearby Palm Beach International Airport, Fort Lauderdale International Airport is 45 minutes south. A little further away is Miami International

Airport —all accessible by public transportation. Residents have easy access to the world's first and third busiest cruise ports (the Port of Miami and Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, respectively). A little over two hours north lies Port Canaveral, the second busiest. The nearby Port of Palm Beach offers Margaritaville at the Sea cruises to the Bahamas. In short, you can get to anywhere in the United States and, indeed, the world relatively easily from Ocean Ridge!

The best part of all the activities and opportunities mentioned above is, when you are done with the hustle and bustle and the hurley burley, you can return to the quiet and serenity of Ocean Ridge. It is simply a great place to work while enjoying the natural beauty that the Florida coast has to offer. So, if you are an experienced professional with strong city/town management and finance background and enjoy working in small communities, please apply!

HISTORY

Ocean Ridge's recent history began in 1885 when new settlers began to arrive in earnest. Located where Ocean Avenue met the Atlantic, the Boynton Beach Hotel opened in 1897. The first bridge to the mainland was built at Ocean Avenue in 1911. The structure was made of wood and had a foundation in the center of the canal and the bridge tender would use a wrench type pipe about four feet long to manually swing the bridge open in a northerly and southerly direction to allow boats to pass.

The area prospered, and in 1920 the Town of Boynton was formed (which included what is now Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Briny Breezes, and the southern part of Manalapan). The hotel was razed in 1925. About this time, the Florida Land Boom waned, and hurricanes struck in 1926 and 1928, causing extensive damage and adding to the Town's problems. As the Depression hit, Boynton's financial problems continued to mount. By 1931, it was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Furthermore, beach dwellers were in a dispute with the Town over property taxes. The owners of these dozen properties were worried about the debt and informed the town they wished to

separate and start a new municipality. When bond holders began to press for payment on nearly $1 million of indebtedness, Boynton and the beach side residents reached an agreement whereby, upon assumption of half of the debt, a new municipality would be established east of the intracoastal waterway. The new town, which would become known as Ocean Ridge, was about three miles long and one-half mile wide. The only area within its boundaries and excluded from the transaction was what is now known as Oceanfront Park. It was retained by the prior municipality.

Over time, Ocean Ridge slowly grew to its current size, with about half of its property owners being seasonal inhabitants. Both they and the permanent residents value their low-key, low-density and low profile existence. Solitude and seclusion are part of life and valued in this small town. Surprisingly, many of those living just over the bridge do not know where Ocean Ridge is

Table I: Ocean Ridge Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	92.7%	0 to 15	5.0%
Black	0.3%	15 to 25	3.8%
Asian	1.7%	25 to 45	12.4%
Native American	0.1%	45 to 65	39.7%
Two or More Races	5.2%	65 to 85	30.9%
Total	100%	Over 85	8.2%
Hispanic Ethnicity	4.3%	Estimated Population: 1,830	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	98.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	37.9%

Other Statistics	
Median Age—Ocean Ridge	58.6
Median Age—U.S.	37.9
Poverty Rate	6.52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

located or the wonderful community it is. A May 10, 1992, Palm Beach Post article referred to Ocean Ridge by stating, "It may be dull, but the residents like it that way." Nothing has changed since then.

DEMOGRAPHICS

See Table 1 on page 4 for more information on Ocean Ridge's demographics.

CLIMATE

Ocean Ridge has a tropical rainforest climate with average summer high temperatures of 90°F and lows in the mid-70°s. The months of June through September tend to be wet and humid with relatively frequent (but short) afternoon thunderstorms. Sea breezes cool the air most of the day. November through April tend to be mostly dry and temperatures average in the mid to upper 70°s with lows around 60°. The Town gets an average of 61 inches of rain annually (the US average is 38 inches). Ocean Ridge averages 233 days of sunshine annually.

From time to time, generally between June 1 to November 30, hurricanes pass though Florida. Contrary to what the national media would have you believe, their impact is generally limited, particularly if you are more than 50 miles from the center of the storm. For example, September's Hurricane Ian, one of the deadliest and most devasting storms in Florida's history, made landfall 120 miles east of Ocean Ridge in Fort Myers on Florida's west coast and proceeded northeast across the state. Though Ocean Ridge experienced some wind and rain, it suffered very little damage.

GEOGRAPHY

Located in Palm Beach County, Ocean Ridge is a small coastal community in Southeast Florida on the Atlantic Ocean and covers 2 square miles, 0.9 square miles of which are land. It borders the small barrier island Town's of Manalapan to the north and Briny Breezes to the south. The Intracoastal Waterway serves as the Town's western border, and just beyond the waterway and

Figure I: Location of Ocean Ridge
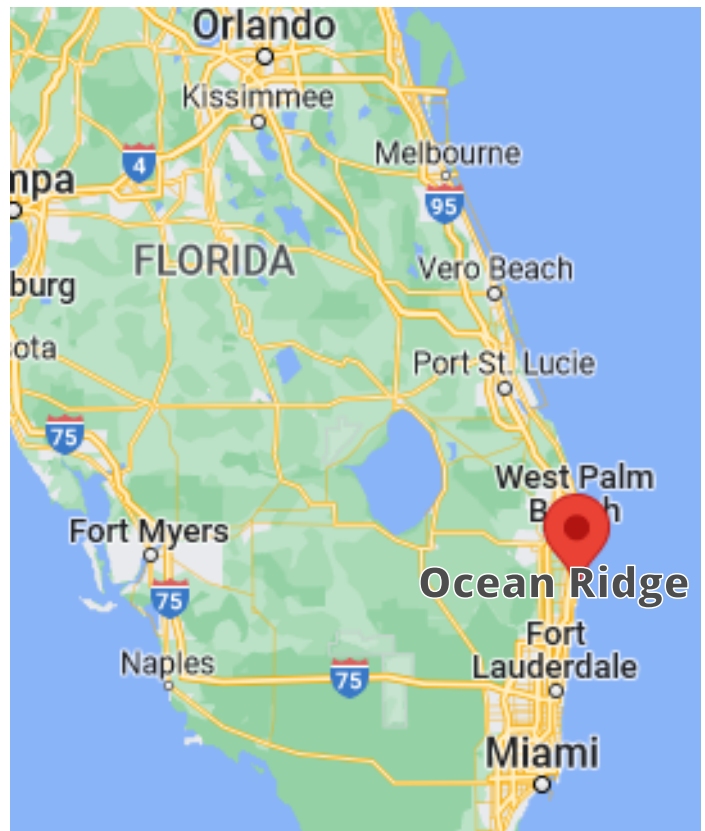
over the bridge is Boynton Beach. The Town is an average of seven feet above sea level. It lies 33 miles north of Fort Lauderdale, and 60 miles north of Miami.

COMMERCE

The Town is almost 100% residential, and it has a healthy mix of single-family residential homes (40%) and condominiums/apartments (60%). The only non-residential enterprises within the Town are the Sun-Dek Beach House (a "grandfathered" hotel), and the parks.

THE GOVERNMENT

The Ocean Ridge government is overseen by a five-member Commission. Its members are elected to three-year terms and are limited to three consecutive terms. After a one year break, they can run again. They are elected at large, and the elections are staggered. The Mayor and Vice-Mayor are selected annually by the members of the governing body. The longest seated Commissioner has served for sixteen years total (with a break in

service), and was most recently elected in 2021, and the other commissioners were first elected in 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2020. Two seats will be up for election in March 2023. The Town Commission appoints the Town Manager and Police Chief.
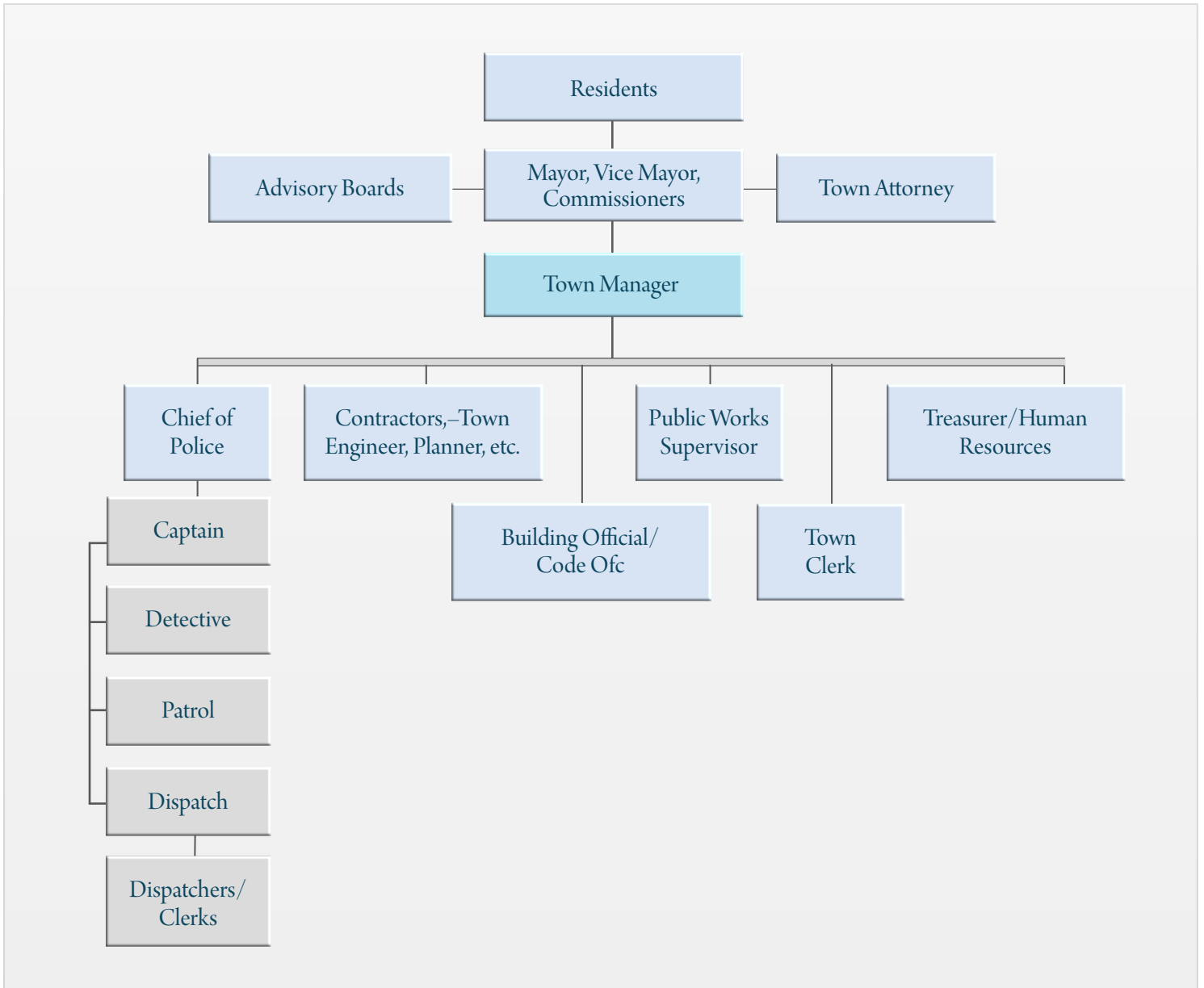
The Commission functions well as a unit and members are respectful of one another. While they may disagree on some issues, many votes are unanimous. They all have a great deal of respect for town staff.

The Town's total budget is $11,952,979 and the general fund budget is $10,087,221. Ocean Ridge employs 32 individuals, and the Town has very little turnover. The Town Manager directly oversees the Town's day-to-day operations, including the Police Chief, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Building Official and Public Works Supervisor. The Town has one union–the Palm Beach County Police Benevolent Association which represents all police officers and sergeants. Figure 2 on page 7 displays the Town's structure.

Services provided by Ocean Ridge employees include police, dispatch, building/permitting/inspections and public works. Fire/EMS and water services are provided by Boynton Beach. The Town is on septic for their wastewater management. WastePro provides solid waste and recycling while the Town contracts with PLACE Planning for planning, Hybrid for back-up zoning and inspections, Chris Wayne & Associates for landscaping/grounds maintenance, Enginuity for engineering, and Torcivia Donlon, Goddeau & Rubin, P.A. for legal services.

Town of Ocean Ridge
Organizational Chart

Organizational chart:

Residents
→ Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners
  (Advisory Boards) — (Town Attorney)
→ Town Manager
  - Chief of Police
    - Captain
    - Detective
    - Patrol
    - Dispatch
    - Dispatchers/Clerks
  - Contractors,–Town Engineer, Planner, etc.
  - Public Works Supervisor
    - Building Official/Code Ofc
  - Treasurer/Human Resources
    - Town Clerk

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Ocean Ridge is financially sound, and residents love their community the way it is. Constantly protecting it and preserving the residents' current quality of life and truly providing a concierge level of service to residents will be the new Manager's first and foremost job. Largely built out and without commercial properties means Ocean Ridge is less attractive to developers, but very attractive to those who wish to tear down existing structures and build something much larger. The latter often pushes the limits of the Town's zoning code and requires variances, which can cause a split among the public and between the elected officials over property rights. A corollary relates to the enforcement of the Town's building code. Satisfying those who do not want change, those who want regulated change, and those who believe strongly in property rights will be a challenge.

The most immediate as well as long-term challenge is flooding. As noted, Ocean Ridge is only about seven feet above sea level. Further, many of its streets end at the Intracoastal Waterway, and flood somewhat regularly. When serious storms occur in conjunction with a King Tide event, the situation worsens. Moreover, as sea level rises (projected to raise one foot by 2050), the problem is here to stay and a serious one that effects resident's quality of life and property values. Solutions need to be developed for both the short and long run, the time to start is now. Discussion is underway about raising the roads. Such an initiative would help protect the roads, but could impact owners with low lying properties.

While the millage rate has been kept low (which current residents appreciate), it has caused some concern about the quality and status of the Town's existing infrastructure. A complete review will need to be conducted, and some hard and costly decisions need to be made. Some examples are a heavily utilized Town Hall building and the water distribution system. The former is dated, and occupancy exceeds its planned capacity. The latter is dated, and many parts are beyond their recommended useful life. A long term, large scale rehabilitation Capital Improvement Plan will be needed soon.

A related challenge is the expiring 30 year contract with neighboring Boynton Beach to provide potable water for the Town's distribution system. This contract needs to be renegotiated. As part of the new agreement, Boynton Beach may want to provide only bulk water to the Town and/or may be interested in acquiring the water distribution system. Going forward will require balancing the desire to keep the distribution system with the cost of upgrading and continually maintaining it. These negotiations need to factor in the future conversion from septic to sewer, as Boynton Beach is the most likely City to provide Ocean Ridge with these services.

Properties in Ocean Ridge are largely on septic systems. Research on various options of sewage disposal is underway; however, it is extremely costly to install a sanitary sewer system and the plan lacks funding. The Town is currently looking for grants. The risk is Florida's Department of Environmental Protection could decide at any moment to mandate the installation of sanitary sewer. There is no indication such a mandate is coming in the near future, but it is possible. As such, the Town would like to avoid that problem, by resolving the issue on its own beforehand.

Ownership of the beach and beach access has been somewhat contentious in recent years. Competing property right interests exist for much of the beach and particularly from the high water mark into the ocean. Historically residents and tourists have used the beach as they wish, irrespective of such property rights. Now some property owners are beginning to want more privacy and are seeking to protect their "private" property. In addition, some condominium owners are fighting with the single-family homeowners over possession of the beach and access to the beach. The Town is often asked to intervene.

An opportunity arises from Ocean Ridge's location. It is one of four small barrier island communities within a ten mile stretch. Opportunities probably exist for consolidation of services and mutual cooperation to help assure long term sustainability. At the very least, by working together, they should be able to accomplish more than they can as individual entities.

Finally, while the Town is financially sound, its residents and elected officials expect the government's resources to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. The next Manager will want to review the organization from top to bottom to ensure processes are as efficient as possible, and that the staff resources are optimally used. Implementation of several new software packages are planned to occur in the near future to help streamline the workload and provide a higher level of service to residents. Though nothing is known to be problematic or to have issues, a fresh set of eyes is always helpful.

All in all, there is a lot to do, and the Manager will be very busy. This is definitely not a retirement job!

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Ocean Ridge is seeking an exceptional manager and leader who has a strong background in finance and passion for the community. While recognizing he/she works for the Commission, the individual will also serve as the elected body's partner and advisor. The best candidate will be confident and comfortable diplomatically telling the elected body what it needs to hear as opposed to what it wants to hear. The Manager will understand politics, but not be involved in them. He/she will be someone who works to keep all five commissioners informed and count to five, not just three. Further, the individual will have unimpeachable integrity, believe strongly in transparency, be technically competent, be achievement oriented, have strong budgeting and finance expertise, and think strategically.

The best candidate will understand that the Manager sets the tone for the organization and how it interacts with the public. He/she will lead by example and make a point of ensuring the Town delivers top notch services. The individual will want Ocean Ridge to be viewed as an attractive community and a great place to live. Excellent customer service will be very important to the Manager. He/she will work well with others and resolve problems in a timely manner. Though the resident is not always right, he/she does deserve to have his/her concerns heard and for the Town to make an honest effort to resolve them.

The Manager will be a consensus and team builder with excellent communications skills. He/she will be active in the community and comfortable talking to individuals from all walks of life. More importantly, he/she will make

others feel valued. Ocean Ridge is a small town, and the Manager is one of the faces of its government.

Personally, the next Town Manager will be approachable, upbeat, high energy, friendly, organized, honest, fair, positive, and compassionate. He/she will have someone with a "can do" attitude while also being very humble. The individual will possess a great deal of common sense and recognize that giving others the credit is often the best way to get things done.

The next Manager will be analytical, and solution oriented. The individual will review current policies, procedures and practices. While he/she will not make change for the sake of change, the Manager will always be looking for more effective ways to accomplish the Town's business.

Within the organization, the Town Manager will delegate where possible and encourage an environment that inspires creativity. The individual will recognize talent, mentor and coach that talent, and be confident enough to step back and allow staff members do their jobs. The ideal candidate will give assignments, set broad performance parameters, and expect results. That said, the Manager will expect to be kept informed and will hold employees accountable. He/she will recognize the staff is small and will pitch in, as necessary. An important part of the Manager's job will be to "have the staff's back, and to keep everyone in their lanes." At times, when a tough decision needs to be made quickly, he/she will not hesitate.

The individual will work well with others. He/she will be adept at intergovernmental relations, and interacting with other agencies to solve problems. The ability to find grants and other sources of external funding will be important as the Town faces some very large projects with limited funds. He/she will also have strong negotiation skills and represent the Town's interests well.

Finally, the ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree in business, public administration, or another area related to town management. The best candidates will have at least five years of experience as a town manager or assistant town manager and have government expertise in finance and budgeting, a growing building department, code enforcement, human resources, and long range strategic planning. Experience in a coastal community, emergency management, and prior work in Florida are pluses. The best candidate will recognize Ocean Ridge as the gem it is and will plan to stay at least five years.

COMPENSATION

The hiring range is $130,000 to $160,000. Actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Ocean Ridge participates in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and provides for voluntary participation in a 457 retirement plan. Other benefits are good but by no means extravagant.

THE MOST RECENT TOWN MANAGER

The previous manager worked for Ocean Ridge for six years, with the last three as the Town Manager. She resigned to become the Manager of a similar community.

RESIDENCY

The new Town Manager is not expected to live within the Town's boundaries. The neighboring City of Boynton Beach provides a wide price range of housing and robust public school system.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit28@cb-asso.com by March 24, 2023. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

The Interim Manager applied when the Town advertised the position twice previously. She may apply again. No other internal candidates are expected.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, given the state of today's media, we would be surprised if this recruitment receives any media coverage, except from the local newspaper.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between March 25th and April 29th. Finalists will be selected on May 1st. followed by background checks of the best candidates. The Consultant will select the candidates it feels are the strongest and a reception and interviews will be held on May 8th and 9th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

TARGET START DATE

Ideally the selected candidate will be able to start on May 8th and 9th. That said, the Town wants the best person it can find and will adjust the start date if necessary.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Town of Ocean Ridge is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply. A veteran's preference will be awarded per Florida law.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the Town, visit:

www.thepalmbeaches.com/explore-cities/ocean-ridge

www.oceanridgeflorida.com