

Ponce Inlet State of the Town Address



C4Pi Special Edition - February 2026



Ponce Inlet residents gathered at the Ponce Inlet Community Center on Wednesday, February 4th at 6:00 p.m. for an engaging Town Hall Meeting with Mayor Paritsky and Council Members, as well as Town staff.

The event included:

State of the Town Address by Mayor Paritsky Town Department Goals for 2026

The meeting concluded with an interactive Q&A session, giving residents an opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts. Thank you to everyone who attended.



Lois Paritsky
Mayor of the Town of Ponce Inlet

 To view the entire meeting, visit the [Citizens for Ponce Inlet Website](http://www.C4Pi.org)

Become a C4Pi Member, it's FREE to join!
www.C4Pi.org/join

Embracing Our Roots: Ponce Inlet Core Values

by Lauren Albinson - Newsletter Editor

Dear Residents of Ponce Inlet,

As we navigate the joys and challenges of life in our beloved coastal community, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on what makes Ponce Inlet truly special. At the heart of our town lies a set of core values dedicated to preserving our identity as a quiet, natural, and residential haven, one that cherishes its small-town charm above all else. These principles guide everything from our daily decisions to our long-term planning, ensuring we prioritize nature, privacy, and an exceptional quality of life for everyone who calls this place home.

Our **Vision Statement** captures this aspiration beautifully: to sustain Ponce Inlet as a stunning and secure community, where high-quality development harmonizes with a professional, responsive government. It's a blueprint for a future where growth enhances rather than erodes our unique character. Complementing this is our **Mission Statement**, which underscores the role of our dedicated town staff. Committed to professionalism and genuine care, they work tirelessly to deliver top-notch services while maximizing the value of every tax dollar. Whether it's maintaining our parks, responding to resident concerns, or planning for tomorrow, their efforts keep our town running smoothly and efficiently.

Ponce Inlet is a place where the rhythm of the waves meets the serenity of everyday life. Our town's vision statement captures this essence perfectly: "***Ponce Inlet is and will be a residential haven for those persons who value nature, quiet, and privacy.***" These words are not just a declaration; they are a promise we make to ourselves, our neighbors, and the generations who will follow. As we face

the challenges of growth and change, it is crucial that we recommit to these guiding principles, ensuring that Ponce Inlet remains a beacon of tranquility and natural beauty for years to come.



At the core of our identity is the concept of a **Residential Haven**. We prioritize privacy, quiet, and a small-town lifestyle that allows families to thrive without the hustle of larger urban areas. From waking up to the sound of birds rather than traffic to enjoying evening strolls along uncrowded beaches, these are the results of deliberate choices we have made as a community. By upholding these values, we protect the peaceful sanctuary that drew many of us here in the first place. For each of us, committing to this haven means fostering spaces where we all can find solace and build lasting memories.



Equally vital is our dedication to **Natural Beauty and the Environment**. Ponce Inlet's pristine landscapes, from its dune systems and wetlands to its diverse wildlife, are irreplaceable treasures. Protecting these elements is not just about conservation; it is about honoring the natural world that sustains us. Whether it's safeguarding sea turtle nesting grounds or preserving mangrove habitats, our actions today ensure that future residents can experience the same unspoiled wonders. Let's remember: when we value nature, we are investing in a healthier, more vibrant community for all.

Our **High-Quality Built Environment** reflects this thoughtful approach. Development in Ponce Inlet must align with our small-scale character, blending seamlessly with the surroundings while protecting historic features. This means thoughtful planning that enhances rather than overwhelms our town. By maintaining these standards, we create a built landscape that's not only functional but also enduringly beautiful.

Of course, none of this happens in isolation. **Community and Citizen Involvement** is the lifeblood of Ponce Inlet. We encourage everyone to participate and volunteer in clubs, on boards, and in our local government. Your involvement shapes policies, organizes events, and builds connections that fortify our town.

Underpinning it all is **Professional and Fair Governance**. We demand integrity, excellence, and transparency from our town staff, ensuring decisions are made with fairness and foresight. This commitment to ethical leadership builds trust and sets a standard for accountability that benefits everyone. As we face evolving needs, strong governance will guide us in preserving what we hold dear.

In an era of environmental uncertainty, **Coastal Resilience** demands our proactive attention. By planning for sea-level rise and climate change through resilient infrastructure and adaptive strategies, we are not just reacting; we are preparing. This forward-thinking approach safeguards our homes, beaches, and ecosystems, allowing Ponce Inlet residents to enjoy the same coastal paradise we do today for generations to come.

Finally, **Historic Preservation** ties our past to our future. Landmarks like the iconic Ponce de Leon Lighthouse stand as symbols of our heritage, reminding us of the explorers and settlers who came before. Preserving these sites honors our history and enriches our cultural fabric, providing educational and inspirational touchstones for everyone.

Fellow residents, our mission statement is not just a relic of the past but yet a blueprint for the future. By embracing these principles, we commit to maintaining Ponce Inlet as a residential haven that values nature, quiet, and privacy. Let us pledge to act as stewards, involving ourselves in the decisions that shape our town. Together, we can ensure that this special place remains a source of pride and peace for generations to come. Your voice, your actions, and your dedication matter. Join us in this enduring promise.



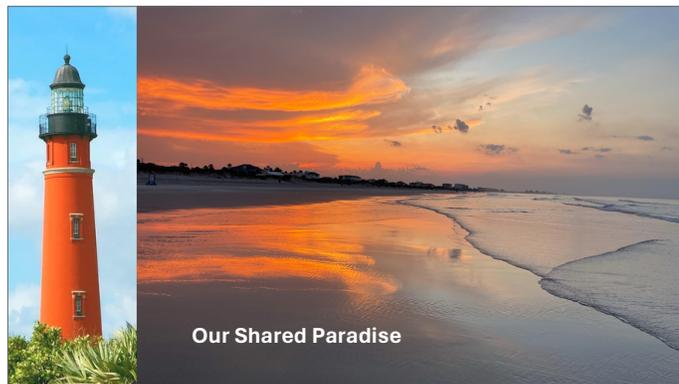
State of the Town Address

Mayor Lois Paritsky

Ponce Inlet Community Center - February 4th 2026



Good evening, and welcome to this year’s presentation of the 2025 State of the Town Address. Your attendance here this evening serves as a powerful reminder of the strong and unified sense of community we share for our home—Ponce Inlet, Florida. The community spirit that fills this room is one of the many reasons why this Town is so unique and so special.



To my neighbors, friends, and fellow residents: There are not too many places left like Ponce Inlet. As many of us travel throughout the state and visit other communities, I know there is always a strong sense of pleasure and comfort whenever we return home. Your entire Town Government and Town Council are committed to preserving and protecting all that is special about the 4.5 square miles of land we call home.

We choose to live here for a list of very simple reasons. Among them are:

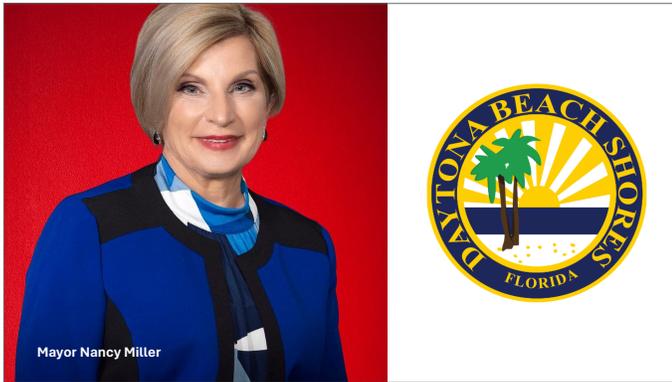
- The quality of life Ponce Inlet offers
- Living in harmony with nature
- A commitment to public safety
- High-quality government services
- And our continued focus on resiliency.

Our collaboration with the County and our neighboring communities has never been stronger or more important to our success. Before I get started with our list of accomplishments for 2025, I would like to recognize several of the elected officials and leaders we have with us today.



From the Volusia County Council, our District 2 representative is Vice Chair Matt Reinhart who is unable to attend this evening. Ponce Inlet is also represented by County Councilman-At-Large Jake

Johansson, who is here with us this evening. Councilman Johansson, would you please stand as well to be recognized?



From our neighboring community to the north, we have Mayor Nancy Miller here with us this evening. Mayor Miller, would you please stand and be recognized? Thank you for joining us here tonight.



Your entire Town Government, led by Manager Mike Disher dedicated itself to continuous improvement and the delivery of high-quality, efficient service to our residents.



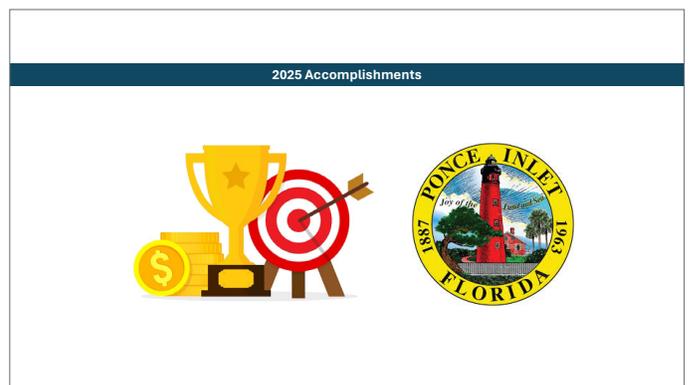
Public safety and community well-being are always top priorities. Our Public Safety leadership team is comprised of two highly experienced, credentialed,

qualified individuals whose dedication and devotion to this Town are nothing short of remarkable. Fire Chief and Public Safety Director Dan Scales and Police Chief Jeff Glazier have more than six decades of combined experience in their respective fields. We are extremely fortunate to have them here for the safety and security of our entire community.

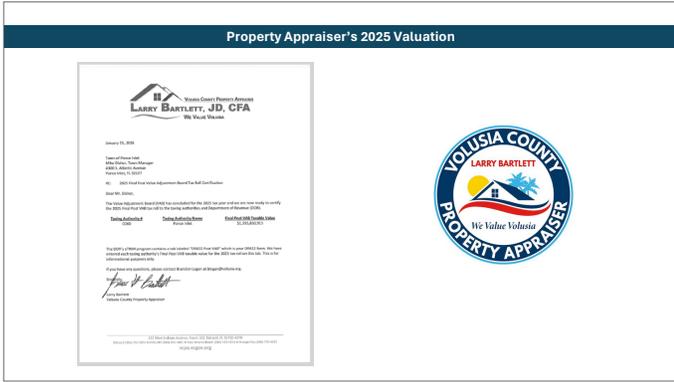


Your Town Council works as a team to set policy, respond to your concerns, and keep us moving forward on the path of continuous improvement. If I could, I would like to ask our Councilmembers to please stand and be recognized:

- Vice Mayor Gary Smith
- Councilmember Bill Milano
- Councilmember Joe Villanella
- Councilmember Skip White



[The Town's official list of 2025 accomplishments and achievements](#) is ten pages in length and far too extensive for me to cover in my presentation. I would encourage everyone to pick up a printed copy that the staff prepared for us of the 2025 accomplishments and placed on the table to my right.



For many of us, our primary homes here in Ponce Inlet represent the single largest item on our family's balance sheet. At the beginning of each year, our Town Manager receives the annual certification from the Value Adjustment Board, which sets the basis for the Town's annual taxable property value. Let's look at those results.



The cumulative taxable value for all the property in our Town is now approaching the \$1.4 billion mark, increasing 4.7% on a year-over-year basis.



In terms of dollars, this represents an increase of more than \$62.5 million over the 2024 valuation.



For those of you who may be watching the macroeconomic trends, the future looks very bright for several fundamental reasons.



Our Town is now a member of and works closely with Team Volusia, an organization dedicated to bringing commerce and high-paying jobs to our surrounding areas within Volusia County.



Careers in technology, computer science, healthcare, and manufacturing are on the rise in Volusia County. These highly compensated individuals will be coming into our area and looking for a place to live.



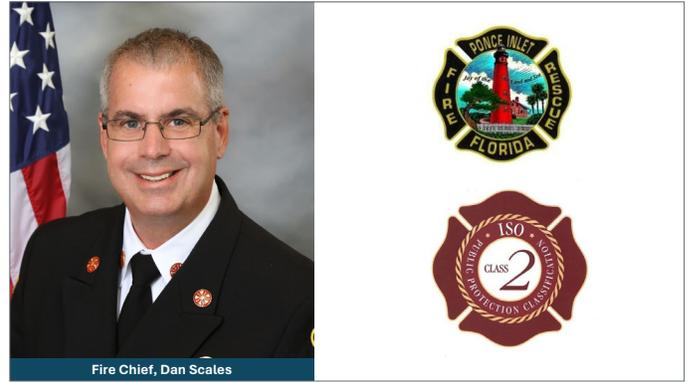
In particular, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is attracting the next generation of aerospace, aeronautical, and engineering graduates from all over the country and the entire world.



Ponce Inlet is uniquely positioned to attract these new residents, offering a unique environment and way of life that is unmatched in this area.



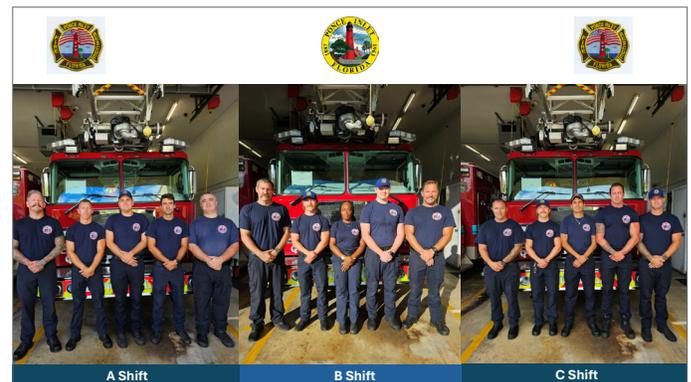
As a community that is close to being fully built out, any increase in demand for residential property in Ponce Inlet should continue to propel a rise in our property values. In terms of accomplishments and our dedication to continuous improvement, let's take a look at some of our 2025 achievements.



Under the leadership of Ponce Inlet Fire Chief Dan Scales and his team, our Fire Department achieved the ISO 2 certification—an accomplishment that is nothing short of remarkable given the relative size of this municipality.



To put this remarkable achievement in perspective, fewer than 6% of all fire departments in the USA have achieved an ISO 2 rating, which demonstrates the level of professionalism and dedication that our firefighters and paramedics have toward our community.



As they complete their final few steps on the path toward accreditation, our Fire Department recently passed a site

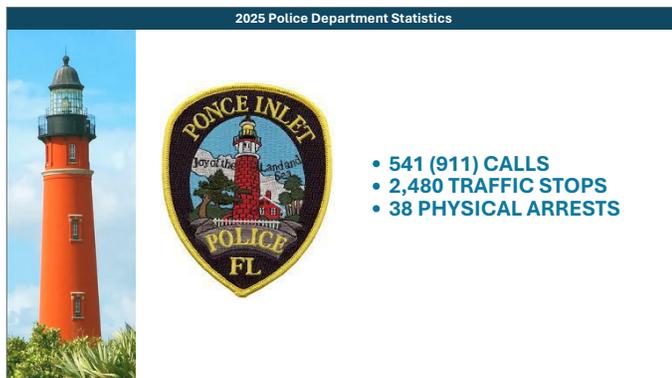
inspection from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). In March, I will join Chief Scales and Town Manager Mike Disher at a scheduled appearance before the full CPSE board, at which time we expect our final consideration and designation to take place.



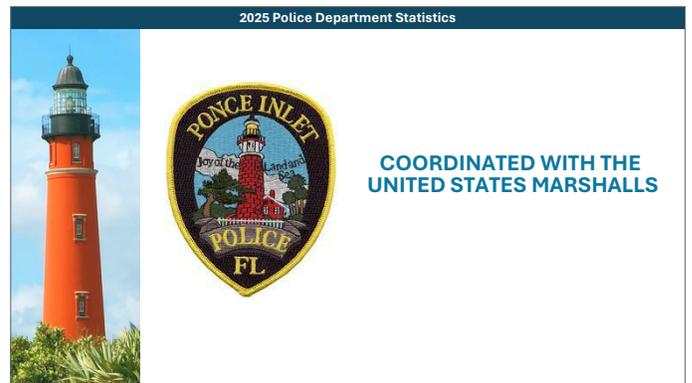
Our Ponce Inlet Police officers are a comforting, reassuring, and constant presence in our community.



Under the command and leadership of Police Chief Jeff Glazier, 2025 was another year of achievement and dedicated service to Ponce Inlet. In 2025, Chief Glazier was elected by his peers to serve as Vice-Chair of the Volusia County Opioid Abatement Funding Advisory Board.



Your Ponce Inlet Police officers responded to 541 9-1-1 calls, performed 2,480 traffic stops, and effectuated 38 physical arrests of individuals within our jurisdiction.



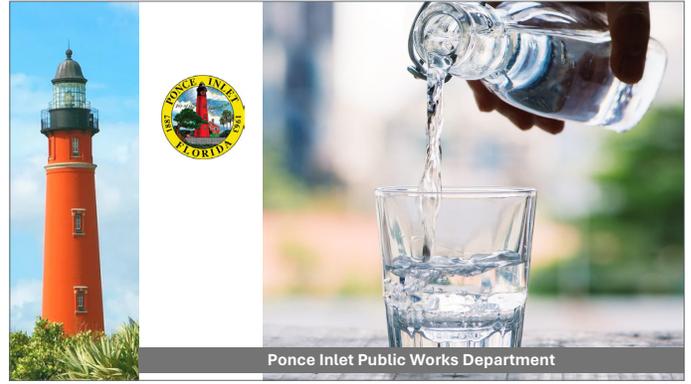
In October, officers assisted U.S. Marshalls with an arrest warrant for a registered sex offender.



Chief Glazier has embraced and implemented the newest technological advances to enhance our safety at every level. By implementing a program known as “Live 911,” our police officers can hear calls phoned in to 9-1-1 in real time as the caller’s position is displayed on a map in their patrol vehicles. When it comes to law enforcement, seconds can make all the difference in the world, and this technology gives our police officers not only a head start when responding but also a heads-up as far as what they can expect when they arrive on the scene.



Our police officers are skilled in serving all our residents, including those with tails, beaks, and fur. Pictured here are two of our police officers responding to reports from residents about wildlife in distress.



Ponce Inlet Public Works Department

Affirming the Town's commitment to a clean water supply, our Public Works Department passed the Florida DEP's water quality testing requirements and published results publicly for transparency.



Ponce Inlet Public Works Department

Continuous rainfall throughout September and October put the Town's stormwater systems to the test.

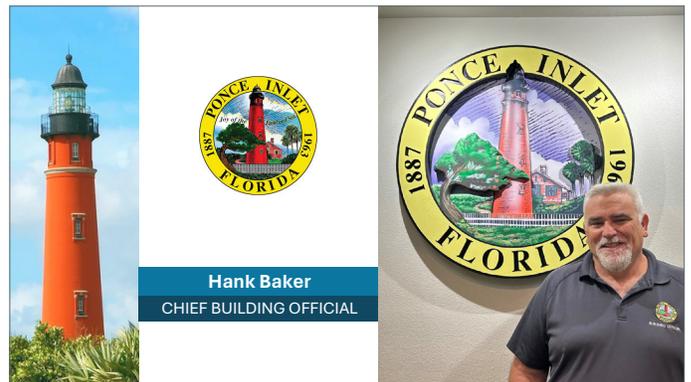


Darren Lear
PLANNING DIRECTOR

Led by Planning Director Darren Lear, our Planning and Zoning Division reviewed 394 permit applications and conducted 96 inspections in 2025.



Public Works crews responded quickly by pumping retention ponds, inspecting swales, and clearing storm drains to prevent flooding. These proactive efforts helped keep roadways open and reduced flooding impacts to nearby homes and properties.



Hank Baker
CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL

Our Chief Building Official Hank Baker and his team issued 1,347 building permits, including six new single-family homes, and conducted 3,153 inspections. Thanks to their efforts, the Town's current Community Rating System classification is a 5, providing

a 25% reduction in flood insurance premiums for our residents. Hank Baker was re-elected by his peers to serve as President of the Volusia/Flagler Building Official Association.



Code Compliance Officer Dave Hooker oversaw 776 cases in 2025 and collected \$122,600 in fines. The hard work and dedication by the code enforcement division helps ensure our ordinances are being enforced for the safety and appearance of the community.



Our transition from an appointed code enforcement board to a special magistrate was completed in 2025.



Under the leadership of Finance Director Kim McColl, the Town received a perfect financial audit for the ninth year in a row. Most of the remaining \$261,000 in FEMA reimbursements related to Hurricane Milton have been collected, with a remaining balance of just \$8,000.



Town staff applied for \$1,800,000 in grants and appropriations for resiliency projects, of which \$585,000 has been approved.



The Town's investments produced a substantial profit for fiscal year 24/25. We received over \$423,200 in interest income revenue—a year-over-year increase of approximately \$91,000 versus fiscal year 23/24.



The Town held 11 public meetings, workshops, and hearings in 2025 to develop budget priorities for Fiscal Year 25-26, establish a millage rate, and hear from the public.

Fiscal Year 2025 - 2026
Council Budget Considerations

- New Stormwater Utility Fund
- Additional Public Works Staff
- Fire Station Site Feasibility Study
- Firefighter Staffing Levels
- Vehicle Lease vs. Purchase Strategies

The Council examined in-depth issues affecting the proposed budget, including proposals to implement a new stormwater utility; the addition of two new Public Works staff members for mid-year 2026; a fire station site feasibility study; maintaining firefighter staffing levels at five per shift; and strategies for vehicle purchasing and leasing.

Building a Resilient Ponce Inlet

- \$585,000 Transform 386 Grant
- Purchase of 54 & 58 South Turn Circle

In furtherance of our ongoing resiliency goals, the Town applied for and was awarded a \$585,000 grant through Volusia County’s Transform386 program to purchase additional undeveloped properties for future stormwater improvements. We also submitted an appropriation request to the Town’s legislative delegation for \$215,000 in matching funds. Council approved the purchase of undeveloped property at 54 and 58 South Turn Circle for future stormwater improvements.

Jackie Alex
CULTURAL SERVICES

Our Cultural Services Director Jackie Alex and her team hosted a total of 30 programs and events with nearly 1,200 total attendees.

Ponce Inlet Athletic Court Reservations
Need Assistance? Call (386) 322-6703
Pickleball Racquetball Tennis Basketball
RESERVE PICKLEBALL

With pickleball being one of our most popular amenities, at Council’s direction, Jackie worked with our IT Department to design and develop a court reservation system that was officially released to the public a short time ago.

Randy Okum
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT Director Randy Okum responded to 520 help desk requests and defended our network against everything from phishing, ransomware, and all manner of computer viruses. Randy also supports the IT needs of our Police and Fire Departments. In 2025, Randy established Ponce Inlet’s own

YouTube Channel, which provides real time views of the Pollard Park athletic courts and the boat ramp, allowing our residents to observe conditions before deciding to visit.



2025 also included the launch of our Town’s very own podcast—Inside Ponce Inlet. Public Information Officer Becky Hugler has taken on this role and done a phenomenal job, producing six episodes since May of 2025. For those of you who enjoy podcasts, Inside Ponce Inlet is extremely well-produced and informative. The QR code on your screen will take you directly to the host page.



Led by Town Clerk and HR Director Kim Cherbano, our HR staff assisted with the onboarding and offboarding of staff members and continued to make progress toward the goal of digitizing 100% of the Town’s records. To make sure Ponce Inlet remains competitive and attracts and retains the most qualified staff members, Kim and her team worked with MGT Management Solutions on a comprehensive salary study and benefits review.



And finally, our advocacy work continues to ensure that our voices are heard on proposed legislation that could adversely affect our Town. Among these are HB 301 on sovereign immunity, HB 305 on local business taxes, HB 943 on amendments to the Live Local Act, and SB 1512, which deals with homestead property exemptions and assessment limitations. All these bills are in addition to SB-180, which would restrict us from implementing land use regulations and growth management policies, as recommended in our resilience studies, such as our watershed master plan. I just returned from Tallahassee with our Town Manager, and we both left there feeling that our local legislators (Senator Tom Wright and Representative Chase Tramont) have a comprehensive understanding of how some of the pending legislation would severely impact our community. It was a productive trip, and I am glad we had the opportunity to be heard.



Once again, I was only able to touch upon a small percentage of the Town’s overall achievements for 2025. Please check the table on your left for a printed copy of the

[complete list](#) as well as a list of our 2026 goals and information about how Ponce Inlet uses ad valorem property taxes to fund municipal services.



On behalf of the entire Town Council, thank you for attending this presentation of the State of the Town Address. As always, if you have questions, concerns, or would like more information on these or any other topics, your Councilmembers are always available. You will find our contact information listed on the [Town's website](#).

Lois A. Paritsky

Thank you.



Town Council Goals: Looking Ahead to FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27

The Town Council has adopted a comprehensive set of goals to guide operations and investments over the next two fiscal years. These goals focus on improving services, strengthening infrastructure, enhancing public safety, supporting staff, and planning responsibly for the Town's future.

Enhancing Community Spaces and Services

The Cultural Services Department will expand museum volunteer participation, replenish trees on Town properties, and improve playground safety through regular inspections. The Town will also launch an ADA-compliant online court reservation system to improve accessibility and ease of use for residents.

Sound Financial Management and Grant Readiness

The Finance Department will pursue funding for shovel-ready septic-to-sewer projects, formalize internal grant management procedures, and participate in the State's disaster recovery cost-calculation program. A major initiative will begin transitioning the Town's budget process to an integrated electronic budgeting system to improve transparency and efficiency.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Fire Department will complete its work toward national accreditation, advance planning and design for a new Fire Station and Emergency Operations Center, and develop a new Community Wellness Program in partnership with the Police Department. The Police Department will focus on maintaining accreditation, increasing traffic enforcement, improving intersection safety, and expanding community programs such as fraud prevention and self-defense classes.

Investing in Employees and Governance

Human Resources will continue efforts to attract and retain a talented workforce, implement new benefits and training platforms, expand wellness initiatives, and gather employee feedback through stay surveys and exit interviews. The Town Clerk's Office will modernize records management, streamline bid and procurement processes, and provide enhanced training opportunities for appointed board members.

Technology and Cybersecurity Improvements

The Information Technology Department's priorities include expanding security cameras at Town facilities, strengthening cybersecurity policies, redesigning network connectivity for reliability and cost savings, and modernizing the Town's phone system.

Planning for Growth, Resilience, and Safety

The Planning and Development Department's goals include implementing online permitting and payments, improving floodplain management and Community Rating System (CRS) scores, reviewing drainage and building standards, strengthening tree protection regulations, advancing coastal resiliency planning, and completing required comprehensive plan updates. Traffic and pedestrian safety improvements—particularly at key intersections—will remain a priority.

Infrastructure and Stormwater Management

Public Works will develop a proactive, multi-year maintenance plan for Town assets, coordinate with utility providers on tree trimming, pursue resiliency grants for flood-prone properties, and complete a rate study to support implementation of a stormwater utility fee.

Together, these goals reflect the Town Council's commitment to responsible governance, public safety, environmental stewardship, and maintaining the high quality of life residents expect in Ponce Inlet.

What This Means for You

- **Easier ways to get things done:** Expect more online options for permits, payments, and court reservations, making Town services quicker and more convenient.
- **Safer streets and neighborhoods:** Ongoing police and fire improvements, along with traffic safety projects, are focused on keeping our community safe.
- **Better protection from flooding:** Long-term planning and infrastructure upgrades are aimed at reducing flood risk and protecting homes and businesses.
- **Parks you can enjoy and be proud of:** From playground maintenance to tree replenishment, the Town is investing in the care of our parks and public spaces.
- **Smart use of tax dollars:** By pursuing grants and improving financial systems, the Town is working to make the most of every dollar.
- **A strong, responsive Town team:** Investments in staff training, wellness, and technology help ensure residents receive reliable, high-quality service.



"Our Mission is to Educate and Preserve"

The Citizens For Ponce Inlet Website compiles and organizes all of the relevant and critical information you need into one single, easy to navigate information portal. It's like having the entire town at your fingertips. With just 1-2 clicks on your smartphone or desktop, you can access:

*Join
Today!*

- Monthly Police & Fire Activity Reports
- How Your Council & Board Members Voted
- Agendas & Minutes for All Meetings
- Extensive Library of Past Meetings
- Participate in our Surveys
- Live Streaming
- News Alerts
- Town News & Events
- Campaign Reports
- Quarterly Newsletters

Ponce Inlet's most informed citizens turn to C4Pi.org to obtain the information they need to be informed on town business, town events and town department activity.

Membership is free. Get informed. Join today.

Promoting and Improving the Quality of Life in the Town of Ponce Inlet

info@C4Pi.org

www.C4Pi.org

If enjoyed this newsletter, please consider supporting our efforts by making a donation and subscribe to our online quarterly newsletter by completing the form below:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____
Email Address: _____

Please make checks payable to Citizens for Ponce Inlet, Inc.

Detach and mail to:

CFPI c/o Ponce Inlet Community Center, 4670 S. Peninsula, Ponce Inlet, Fl., 32127
or become a free member online and make your donation on our secure website with your credit card at www.c4pi.org Your generosity is appreciated. Thank you.