

Town of Oriental Proposed Annual Budget Fiscal Year 2021-2022

To: Mayor Sally Belangia

Board of Commissioners

From: Diane H. Miller, Manager and Budget Officer

Date: May 7, 2021

Re: Budget Message 2021-2022

As the fiscal budget allows our citizenry to transparently view the fiscally responsible use of their tax money, I have respectfully submitted a budget to the Board for their consideration and further adoption of a Budget Ordinance for FY 2021-2022 in time for a public hearing scheduled for June 1, 2021.

How money is handled and accounted for throughout the year is dictated by GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) and GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) plus monitored by our auditors and ultimately reported annually to the LGC (Local Government Commission). Two distinct funds, General Fund & Water Fund, must have separate reserves, be balanced and accounted for individually, but are worked from a central depository and are in this budget as presented.

The balanced budget has been produced in accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, and was resolved and will be presented in its final form to the Board at the June 1, 2021 regular Town Board Meeting. Even with the extensions and relaxation of some of the budget procedures adopted by the General Assembly, and the difficulties associated with meeting throughout this past Fiscal Year, we were able to produce a balanced budget within the original time constraints. At the time of publishing public notice, a copy was filed with the Office of the Clerk at Town Hall where it has been and shall remain available for public inspection until the required Budget Ordinance is adopted to take effect July 1, 2021.

Last year's budget was more of an educated guess than normal, due to the unusual year, almost its entirety under emergency orders from the Governor. The Town of Oriental was faced with dismal revenue projections from the League of Municipalities, something we usually used as a steadfast guide and had always previously adhered to without question. I tempered those dismal projections, looking additionally at local trends, and blending the two, noting that our revenues may be reduced somewhat, but likely not to the extent projected by the League. Our slightly reduced projections were still outpaced. As COVID wound down, and real estate turned up, the addition of nearly \$21M of real property to our inventory assisted in the relief. We are adding new single family residences and losing previously vacant lots at a pace not seen since the 1980s-1990s development boom.

Again, in the Manager's opinion, the proposed budget is a maintenance budget, hoping that the addition of several new pieces of large equipment and vehicles should be relatively maintenance and repair-free.

We added a new tractor, paid for by a grant received from the North Carolina Office of Resiliency and Recovery, noting the heavy use made of the previous equipment in cleaning up Hurricanes Florence, Dorian, and Isaias. In addition, documentation of recovery in all three of those to include equipment hours and labor gave us additional capital funding (along with a previously built Capital Reserve) to replace our dump truck with a more capable version moving forward. A new Police vehicle will also come online in the near future, also paid by the documentation of equipment and staff hours from previous storms, paid by FEMA funds. We are poised to capably be able to handle another such event, but as always, are hoping to skip another year of storms. This budget is a fiscally responsible effort, delivering required services at acceptable rates. The adherence to maintenance schedules, record-keeping, personnel qualifications, and recognition of longer term capital needs planning are provided herein.

At the retreat in March of 2021, a list of priority needs was discussed, in an attempt to decide which projects, in which order, with limited resources, can be accomplished. The extent or size of the services is largely controlled by the available funds (Revenues, plus any monies taken from Fund Balance) and Appropriations (expenses or monies spent) coupled with the efficiencies we practice in utilizing these funds.

The Retreat directs our priorities for the upcoming year and targets a few projects each year to increase our provided services or enhance services already provided. It also provides for staff by equipping them adequately. This is where the Board took all recommendations on the budget prepared by the Manager in her capacity as Budget Officer. Additional Recreational facilities, significant upgrades to the Water Plant to improve water quality and safety of processing, and additional resources at the second well will lengthen life expectancy of some of our most expensive equipment in water treatment, as well as make redundant our capability to sustain provision of water in a declared weather emergency, and rework of our website to become more mobile-friendly are all provided in this budget. The overwhelming support and guidance offered by those with specialized knowledge was invaluable once again, and directed the most efficient use of limited funds for maximum benefit.

FY 21-22 marks the third of three years of action on a Pay and Class study, that moved salaries to comparable to a 10 year weighted average, dependent on each employee's responsibilities. As we all wear several hats, those classed by the School of Government for communities under 2500 population were averaged and then stepped to those averages over the 19-20, 20-21, and 21-22 Fiscal Years. I firmly believe that we are blessed with a dedicated staff that truly cares about the citizenry and does everything in their power to make things work, and accomplishes the desires of the Town.

There are several significant factors that skew our numbers this year, similarly to the skew we experienced as we added our shoreline stabilization at Whittaker Pointe over the last few years. Once we add a project with a value over the Town's annual operating cost, the entire year's operations are skewed in the percentages. This year, we will add a legislated and moving \$250,000 from the Federal Government's American Recovery Plan, and we will also appropriate from savings \$200,000 from our Powell Reserves and start repaving according to the results of our Paving Study done in the 20-21 FY. In addition, it is likely that the Whittaker Pointe Restoration will have to roll into the 21-22 FY, further skewing our normal numbers.

No fund balance is to be used to balance the General Fund budget. No property tax increase is proposed, but it is understood that Pamlico County's property rates are beyond our control and may affect our residents if the governing body chooses to raise them. The Board and staff feel that the burden shouldered by so many following the COVID pandemic required the government to tighten its belt in order to not increase the burden on its citizens in this unusual year. Fees in the Chapter S Fee Schedule will be adjusted this year to include a raise in the Variance fee to \$400 in order to cover the Town's legal advertising costs for the process, institute a Vendor Fee of \$25 for all vendors wanting to sell temporarily in the Town, including food trucks, pop-up sales situations, and solicitation permits, which require background checks, and also to institute a \$25 Driveway Permit Fee, due to the research and time

required to approve the same. In addition, language is clarified in the schedule to note specifically that a Land Use Permit IS a compliance permit and is included in that residential schedule. Using staff to perform many of the repairs may have brought them in under estimates. This schedule is presented at the Public Hearing with the proposed budget as is customary.

We currently retain approximately 73% of our operating budget, well above the statutorily required 8%, however, budgets as small as ours are recommended to reserve at least to 50% in case of catastrophic system failure or weather emergency and repair. We have not funded the storm preparedness line item this year, in order to help balance the budget, but are confident that we have enough reserve to cover storm recovery, and the expertise to file for financial assistance if and when it is provided for storm recovery.

The Sanitation Fund does not currently operate as a standard enterprise fund. It is significantly subsidized by the general fund taxes by a factor of \$.0265/\$100 (almost \$63,000) on property tax. That supplement may well increase next year as a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase on processing and perhaps on tipping as well. The fairly new green waste removal service is provided as part of this fund and exists to remove dead vegetation so that it is not in ditchwork and burned in the Town Limits. So, all residents benefit from the service, even if they do not make personal use of it. A raise in the processing fee of 2% was negotiated in exchange for extension of the contract by one year to June 2024, with a cap on future increases at 2%. It should be noted that recycling is provided at a cost of over \$8/bin/month, but residents continue to pay \$2/bin/month, and this fee may be adjusted to cover that cost in the future.

The Water Fund is balanced with no increases to any fees There is an elevated tank maintenance cost over years past as we spread the cost of the recent lead abatement over 5 years, this being the final payment of \$22,500. Next fiscal year our annual maintenance cost (cleaning, inspection, routine maintenance, should drop to around \$15,000/year as opposed to the \$40,000 you see in this year's budget. In addition, while a pass-through cost to Oriental, we do the billing for Bay River Metropolitan Sewer District(BRMSD), and, as in the County property tax, we have no control over the governing body of BRMSD, nor the rates charged for sewer service. We have been notified of no increase in rates at the time of this writing.

Budget Overview

The budget being presented for your consideration is balanced in accordance with N.C.G.S. §159-8. The proposed operating budgets for our major funds are:

General Fund \$ 1,340,930.00 Water Fund \$ 499,825.00

Combined 2021-2022 Operating Budget \$ 1,840,755.00

The General Fund budget was derived and balanced with no increase to the tax rate. The Water Fund is balanced without an increase to water rates. (N.C.G.S §143.355.4) The Whittaker Pointe project will be added by amendment *if necessary*, though we are driving to finish it and get it off the books prior to the close of FY 2020-2021. This project is a wash through revenues and expenses in that the project is totally grant funded and requires no appropriation from the Town.

General Fund

GF Revenues

Ad Valorem ("according to value") property taxes should amount to \$531,288 of revenue as computed within guidelines, with our proposed tax rate at \$0.22 per \$100 county assessed valuation. One penny (\$.01) on the tax rate generates \$24,142.00. Oriental contracts with the Pamlico County tax office to collect our taxes. (as adjusted by a 105% collection rate- the collection rate [from May 2020- used as directed by N.C.G.S. §159-13 (b)(6)] has increased, likely due to new construction. The collection rate is

projected to be approximately 100% for the 2021-2022 FY, and 100% was used to budget as the year end numbers had not yet been verified as total, and we would never consider budgeting at over 100%.

Sales and Use tax, and expected revenues from sales of beer & wine have been conservatively estimated as is customary for Oriental, and based on projections received from the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM). As a mostly residential community, property tax is the disproportionate contribution of all revenue. As the market continues to recover, we will likely see an increase in new homes added to the inventory and fewer homes vacant. We have issued seven (7) new single family residential zoning permits as well as seventeen (17) other improvements and two (2) structures being raised on compliance forms in this fiscal year, with several previously vacant lots now developed. The addition of nearly \$21 million dollars in property value added this fiscal year attests to the fact that new structures and mobile units are gracing our Town. Other revenues were typically based upon historical data and trend observations and analysis.

The addition of the Dog Park has been a popular new facility. Tags expire June 30, 2021 and new tags and registration will be required for July 1. Rabies vaccination proof must be presented at Town Hall to renew the tags. OPD and Pamlico Animal Control are checking tags intermittently at the park.

We are looking to establish, on a test case basis, a bank of off-grid, solar powered streetlights, in an effort to reduce annual operating costs in the longer term, and reduce the light pollution currently in Town, moving toward a dark-skies compliancy.

Our small staff functions efficiently enough to deliver the services expected from a much larger contingent, by the education received and dedication given. Staff has moved forward with certification renewal and continuing education in all departments.

GF Appropriations

General Fund appropriations were typically based upon historical data adjusted by trend observations. 2021-2022 General Fund changes/projects:

- Storm water drainage maintenance will be performed by staff with the assistance of contractors and is expected to continue to be a prime focus.
- The Whittaker Pointe Restoration as another key focus and is almost complete, permit modification approved May 3, 2021.
- Significant funding is moved from Powell Reserves to begin paving according to the Street Assessment completed in 2020-2021.
- Reserve Funding was eliminated from this budget.
- Additional Capital Projects are projected to be grant funded.

Water Fund

Budgeting for the water fund has few changes. The percentages of employee salary attributed to the Water Fund are calculated from tracked time in that fund from the previous year are based on the previous year's tracked time in each fund. Also, adhering to N.C.G.S. §143.355.4(b)(1), the Town must establish rates and maintain adequate reserves for the repair and rehabilitation of the system's aging infrastructure to be eligible for any grants or loans through the state in the future.

2021-2022 Water Fund projects:

- continuation of meter replacement schedule
- Replacement of Softener Media
- Purchase/installation of chlorine alarm
- Generator purchase/installation at Wellhead #2 (next to Woman's Club)

For comparison of Oriental's water rates to other municipalities and water suppliers across the state it is recommended to visit the website:

http://www.efc.sog.unc.edu/reslib/item/north-carolina-water-and-wastewater-rates-dashboard

Our water quality surpasses State water quality regulations and the Town of Oriental is committed to delivering a quality product at a reasonable cost. The current cost is less than recommended by the State, less than Pamlico County, as can be seen on the dashboard linked above. Our water loss remains around 7-8%, and is now steady at the lower rate. Our CCR is available online as required by NCGS. Our testing requirements have been relaxed by the State, owing to consistently good tests. However, the potential presence of additional minerals are now being required.

In closing, exiting the FY 20-21 budget better than projected, the addition of so much development and the promise of more coming, great documentation of our equipment use and man-hours in the recovery following several back-to-back storms, and the potential for American Recovery Plan funding to provide those large items in the Water System that would have taken years to purchase, have taken tremendous weight off of the budget. Thank you, especially to the Board for their vision, looking toward the future needs of the Town of Oriental and its economic stability, and identifying those items as priority that service our residents and keep visitors coming. My thanks to those who offered guidance and alternative solutions during the construction of this budget. Very few of the general public participated in the creation of this budget, which I hope means that the confidence in our ability to be financially responsible with tax revenues is increasing. The Board and I always welcome input, most especially during the creation of the budget, and we encourage the general public to contact me directly with any questions or suggestions throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane H. Miller, MPA, ICMA-CM

Manager, Town of Oriental

TOWN OF ORIENTAL BUDGET ORDINANCE 2021-275 FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Oriental, North Carolina:

SECTION 1: APPROPRIATIONS. The following amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of the Oriental Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending on June 30, 2022 in accordance with the following schedules:

SCHEDULE A. GENERAL FUND

Administrative Department	\$ 334,057.62
Police Department	132,844.07
Public Works Department	303,920.65
Sanitation	201,976.66
Transportation and Streets	235,000.00
Non-Powell Transportation/Streets	31,751.00
Special Appropriations	83,025.00
Recreation	<u> 18,355.00</u>

TOTAL GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS \$ 1,340,930.00

SCHEDULE B. WATER FUND

Administrative Department	\$ 134,149.00
Distribution & Water Plant	\$ 365,676.00

TOTAL WATER FUND APPROPRIATIONS \$499,825.00

SECTION 2. ESTIMATED REVENUES. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022 to meet the foregoing appropriations.

SCHEDULE A. GENERAL FUND

	# 510 500 00
Current Year Property Tax	\$512,538.00
Current Year DMV Tax	\$25,000.00
Prior Year Property Tax	\$16,000.00
Interest on Taxes	\$2,750.00
NC Sales Tax Refund	\$4,500.00
G/F Sales Tax	\$205,000.00
Federal and State Fuel Tax refund	\$1,300.00
Franchise Tax	\$70,000.00
Beer & Wine Tax	\$4,000.00
Occupancy Tax (Tourism)	\$14,000.00
Occupancy Tax (Waterfront Enhancement)	\$14,000.00
Solid Waste Fees	\$105,000.00
Recycling Fees	\$18,250.00
Powell Bill Allocation	\$35,000.00
Powell Bill Interest	\$10.00
Police Tickets	\$25.00
Police Report	\$25.00
Police Other income	\$25.00
G/F Other Income	\$150.00
Dog Park Registration	\$375.00
Zoning and Permit Fees	\$2,800.00
Solid Waste Disposal Tax	\$682.00
G/F Interest Income	\$225.00
Watercraft Rack Rental	\$200.00
WFE Appropriated	\$51,500.00
Powell Bill Appropriated	\$200,000.00
ARP Funds	\$56,000.00
NC Community Foundation Grant	\$1575.00

TOTAL GENERAL FUND ESTIMATED REVENUES \$ 1,340,930.00 SCHEDULE B. WATER FUND

Water Collections	\$270,000.00
Late Fees	\$3,000.00
Reconnect Fees	\$1,100.00
Water Service Fees (meter deposit)	\$4,200.00
Water Billing Service Fees (use of webpay)	\$1,600.00
Water Tap Fees	\$8,000.00
Irrigation Meter Fee	\$900.00
Water Fund Interest	\$25.00
NC Sales Tax Refund	\$4,500.00
Other Income	\$100.00
BRMSD Billing Fee	\$12,400.00
ARP Infrastructure	\$194,000.00

According to N.C.G.S. § 159-13.2. Project ordinances, the Whittaker Pointe Restoration Project is a separate Project and may or may not continue into the FY 21-22, dependent on May and June 2021 progress, and need not be re-appropriated into this budget as it was a continuation of a project already authorized.

SECTION 3. TAXES LEVIED. There is hereby levied the following rates of tax on each hundred dollars (\$100) valuation of taxable property, as listed for taxes for January 1, 2021, for the purpose of raising the revenue for the Current Year's Property Tax, as set forth in the foregoing estimates of revenues, and in order to finance the foregoing appropriations:

GENERAL FUND (for the general expenses incident to the proper government of the Town of Oriental).....\$0.22

TOTAL RATE per \$100 of valuation of taxable property.....\$0.22

Such rate of tax is based on an estimated total valuation of property for purposes of taxation of \$241,142,767 property value (\$531,288.00-levy, including additional discoveries), and an estimated rate of collections of 100%.

One penny (\$.01) on the tax rate produces \$24,142.77

SECTION 4. TRANSFERS. The Budget Officer is hereby authorized to transfer appropriations as contained herein under the following conditions: Expenditures may not legally exceed appropriations at the functional level for all annually budgeted funds. Amendments are required for any revisions that alter total expenditures of any fund or that change functional appropriations by more than \$1,000. The Town Manager has the authority to amend appropriations within departments. All other amendments must be approved by the Governing Board. She must make an official budget amendment of transfers between departments as described above according to N.C.G.S § 159-15, at the next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 5. DISTRIBUTION. Copies of this ordinance shall be furnished to the finance officer of the Town of Oriental, to be kept on file by her for her direction in the disbursement of funds.

Adopted this 1st day of June, 2021.	
Mayor	Town Manager, Clerk to the Board

Town of Oriental Ordinance 2021-276

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ORIENTAL CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF ORIENTAL.

Section 1. That the Oriental Code of General Ordinances, Chapter S, entitled Town Rates and Fees, Article I, entitled Water Rates, through Article II, entitled Development and Administrative Fees, be amended with the following text:

CHAPTER S - TOWN RATES AND FEES

ARTICLE I - WATER RATES

2018 2021

Residential and 3/4" Commercial Water Rates Cost per 1,000 Gallons

Ga	llons	Rate
0	2,000	3.75
2,001	5,000	4.15
5,001	Or more	4.25

2015 2" Meter or Larger Commercial Water Rates

Gallons	Rate
0-25,000	\$4.25
25 001+	\$4.40

WATER FEES:

Water Tap Fees

3/4" meter \$1,675 2" meter (short tap) \$1,875 \$3,325 2" meter (long tap)

Larger than 2" meter or 2" line To be determined at time of tap \$450 Irrigation meter

Meter Deposits

\$0 Irrigation Meter Commercial 2" Meter \$125

To be determined at time of tap Larger than 2" meter or 2" line

Customer Deposits

Residential

\$100 (\$75 refundable when account closes) Residential, Owner

\$50 Water Deposit, \$50 Sewer Deposit, \$25 Non Refundable Service Fee

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\$150 (\$125 refundable when account closes) \$75 Water Deposit, \$25 Sewer Deposit, \$25 Non Refundable Service Fee

Businesses

Restaurants T		
5000-10,000 gallons	\$75	*
10,000-20,000 gallons	\$250	*
20,000-40,000 gallons	\$350	*
Retail	\$50	*
Real Estate	\$50	*
Fish House	\$500	*
Marinas	\$150	*
Motels	\$200	*
Condos \$50/Unit up to	\$500	*
Bed & Breakfast	\$75	*

^{*} Plus \$25 Non Refundable Service Fee, Sewer Deposit \$25 if building is owned, \$50 deposit if building is leased or rented.

Monthly Base Rate

Residential	\$16
Irrigation	\$16
Business ¾" meter	\$20
Larger than 2" meter or 2" line	To be determined at time of tap
Business 2" Meter	\$40
Subtractive Meters	\$16

Miscellaneous Water Fees/Rates

After Hours request-connection/disconnection	\$30
After hours reconnect (disconnected for nonpayment)	\$60
Reconnect Fee	\$25
Re-read Fee	\$10
Returned check fee	\$25

Cross Connection/Backflow Permit \$50 original permit, \$10 permit renewal

Tampering/Damage/Replacement Fees

Tampering	\$25
Damage- meter	\$45
Damage-angle stop	\$45
Damage-check valve	\$40

WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN FEES (only in effect when WSRP is activated)

Phase I Continued consumption by non-essential users: 2^{nd} offense-\$25

[†] Based on one year's average or previous owner's usage

Phase II continued consumption by non-essential users: 1st offense-\$50, each offense thereafter increases by \$50

Phase III continued consumption:

1st offense-\$100, 2nd offense \$350, 3rd offense- disconnection from system

Surcharges added for residential usage during WSRP activation:

25%added for consumption over 1,001-1,250 gal/person/month 75% surcharge for consumption 1251-1500 gal/person/month 150% surcharge for usage over 1,500 gal/person/month

Commercial/institutional/industrial surcharges: All users required to

decrease usage by 25% of the previous 12 month average:

failure to comply:

10-24% decrease in usage- 25% surcharge

0-9% decrease in usage-50% surcharge

1-25% increase in usage- 100% surcharge

above 25% increase in usage- 150% surcharge

ARTICLE II. - DEVELOPMENT & ADMINISTRATIVE FEES:

Driveway \$25

Sign Permit \$25

Letter of Compliance (LUP/Zoning) \$25 for outbuildings under 200 sq. ft. &

decks

Letter of Compliance (Zoning 200+sqft) \$150

Minor Subdivision (6 lots or less)Appl \$200 + \$3/lot

Major Subdivision (7 lots or more) Application:

Less than 1 Acre:

Sketch design review \$50.00

Preliminary Plat review \$75.00 +\$3/lot Final Plat review \$25.00 +\$3/lot

1 Acre to 5 Acres:

Sketch design review \$75.00

Preliminary Plat review \$100.00 +\$3/lot

Final Plat review \$50.00 +\$3/lot

Over 5 Acres to 10 Acres:

Sketch design review \$100.00

Preliminary Plat review \$125.00 +\$3/lot

Final Plat review \$50.00 +\$3/lot

Over 10 Acres to 20 Acres:

Sketch design review \$150.00

Preliminary Plat review \$150.00 +\$3/lot

Final Plat review	\$100.00 +\$3/lot
Over 20 Acres to 40 Acres: Sketch design review Preliminary Plat review Final Plat review	\$200.00 \$200.00 +\$3/lot \$125.00 +\$3/lot
Over 40 Acres: Sketch design review Preliminary Plat review Final Plat review	\$250.00 \$300.00 +\$3/lot \$150.00 +\$3/lot
Plan Amendment Plan Amendment Special Use Permit Amendment to Zoning Map Annexation Petition Variance Copy of GMO Map Copy of GMO Map larger than 11X17 Copier Fees Fingerprinting Fee Parking Ticket Fees If paid within: One (1) Regular Business Day* Two (2) Regular Business Days* After Two (2) Business Days* * A regular business day is constituted as Town Hall, Monday through Friday.	\$25 Minor change \$150 Major Change \$350 \$400 \$1,000 \$200—\$400 \$5 \$45 \$.20 Per page \$5 \$25 \$50 \$75 that which regular business is conducted within
Police Report Vendor/Solicitation (1 year permit) ARTICLE III. SOLID WASTE & RECYCLI	\$5 \$25 NG – MONTHLY RATE:
Residential & Commercial 65 gallon garbage 95 gallon garbage Add'l 65 gallon Add'l 95 gallon Recycle Bin Add'l recycle bin	\$11.30 \$13.40 \$11.30 \$13.40 \$2.00/Bin \$11.30 (6 or more bins)
Section 2. This Ordinance shall be effective July 1, 2021.	
Adopted this 1st Day of June 2021.	
Sally Truitt Belangia, Mayor	Diane H. Miller, Town Manager