

INTRODUCTORY SECTION

This Page Intentionally Left Blank



Nice Matters!

Town of Emerald Isle
7500 Emerald Drive
Emerald Isle, NC 28594

252-354-3424 voice
252-354-5068 fax

www.emeraldisle-nc.org

Mayor
Eddie Barber

Mayor Pro-Tem
Floyd Messer, Jr.

Board of Commissioners
Tom Hoover, Jr.
Jim Normile
John Wootten
Maripat Wright

Town Manager
Frank A. Rush, Jr.
frush@emeraldisle-nc.org



October 6, 2015

The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Board of Commissioners
Town of Emerald Isle
Emerald Isle, North Carolina

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Town of Emerald Isle, North Carolina, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015, is hereby submitted. Responsibility for both the accuracy of the data, and the completeness and fairness of the presentation, including all disclosures within this report rests with the management of the Town of Emerald Isle. The financial statements and supplemental schedules contained herein have been audited by the independent certified public accounting firm of Williams • Scarborough • Smith • Gray, LLP and their unqualified opinion is included in the financial section of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The Town of Emerald Isle provides a full range of services to its citizens. General Fund services include police, fire, planning and inspections, public works, parks and recreation, and various other services. The Town's significant beach nourishment activities are reflected in the Future Beach Nourishment Fund, and the Town also utilizes several capital projects funds. There are no exclusions described herein and all the Town's operations are included within this report.

As demonstrated by the statements and schedules included in the financial section of the report, the Town continues to meet its responsibility for sound financial management. Immediately following the Independent Auditor's report is Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A), which provides a narrative overview of the Town's financial performance for fiscal year ended June 30, 2015. This letter of transmittal is designed to complement the MD&A and should be read in conjunction with it.

Profile of the Town of Emerald Isle

Emerald Isle is located on the western 12 miles of Bogue Banks, a ~25 mile barrier island located on North Carolina's central coast in Carteret County. Emerald Isle is located approximately 35 miles southwest of Cape Lookout.

The Town occupies approximately 5.2 square miles, and the corporate limits are entirely on the barrier island. The width of the island at Emerald Isle varies from as narrow as .2 miles on the eastern end of Town, to approximately .8 miles in the central and western areas of the Town. The Town is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the south, the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway to the north, Bogue Inlet to the west, and the Town of Indian Beach to the east. The principal highways serving the Town and the surrounding areas are NC 58, NC 24, and US 70. NC 58 traverses the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway via a high-rise bridge that enters western Emerald Isle and serves as the primary means of access to and through the Town. Another high rise bridge serves the barrier island in the Town of Atlantic Beach, located approximately 10 miles east of the eastern corporate limits of the Town.

The Town is a popular oceanfront resort. Visitors come from all over North Carolina, the United States, and foreign countries to enjoy the Town's sandy beaches, excellent water quality, boating and fishing opportunities, and relaxed, family atmosphere. The Town has worked hard to maintain a family beach and small-town atmosphere, and is primarily developed with single family and duplex residential properties. The Town has developed in a low density fashion, with only approximately 2 housing units per acre, and a long-standing requirement to retain approximately 1/3 of each residential lot in its natural condition (no removal of significant trees or alteration of topography). Commercial development is concentrated along a two-mile stretch of NC 58 near the center of Town. The Town limits building heights to 40 or 50 feet throughout the Town, with only two condominium structures taller than 50 feet (approximately 75 feet tall). Almost all structures (single-family residential, multi-family residential, and commercial) in the Town are 1, 2, or 3 stories tall.

According to the US Census, the Town's permanent population has increased from 3,488 in 2000 to 3,655 in 2010. The North Carolina State Demographer estimates the Town's annual population as of July, 2014 at 3,775. With a significant number of second homes, these population estimates are likely understated when one considers that many retired second home owners split their time between Emerald Isle and their original home, with considerable extended amounts of time spent in Emerald Isle all throughout the year. As more second home owners reach retirement in the future, the presence of additional people in the Town is likely to continue to expand, as well as the permanent population estimate.

The total tax base of the Town is approximately \$2.7 billion, and represents about 20% of the total Carteret County taxable value. Emerald Isle has the largest tax base of any municipality in Carteret County, and exceeds the combined tax base of the main permanent population center in the Morehead City / Beaufort / Newport area of Carteret County. Housing units are perhaps a better indicator of the size and complexity of the Town, and according to the 2010 census, there are more than 6,700 housing units in the Town, with approximately 5,000 of these serving as second homes or vacation rental units. During the peak of the summer season, Emerald Isle's population is estimated at more than 40,000 people.

There are 21 oceanfront municipalities in North Carolina, and Emerald Isle ranks at or near the top of nearly all measures of size – including permanent population, taxable value, housing units, and land area. Because of its beautiful natural environment and commitment to a “family beach” and small-town atmosphere, the Town has developed into a popular vacation and retirement destination, and has also grown into a desirable place for young families.

The Town operates under the council-manager form of government, and has since the Board of Commissioners adopted this form in 1997. The Board of Commissioners consists of five members, elected to serve staggered four-year and two-year terms. The Mayor is elected separately for a four-year term. The Town Manager is appointed by the Board of Commissioners, and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The Town Attorney is also appointed by the Board of Commissioners, and serves at their pleasure. All other Town staff are appointed by the Town Manager.

The Board of Commissioners determines Town priorities, establishes programs and services to address community needs, adopts and amends the annual budget, enacts the annual tax rate and other fees, regulates land use, and provides policy direction to the Town Manager. The Town Manager implements Board policies, performs research on policy issues, provides recommendations to the Board, develops the recommended budget, oversees day-to-day operations, and supervises Town department heads. The Board of Commissioners approves all agreements and large contracts. The Board of Commissioners appoints citizens to various Boards and Committees and represents the Town as the overall leadership entity.

The Town provides the following services to its citizens: law enforcement, emergency management, planning and inspections, fire suppression, fire prevention, sanitation, street maintenance, storm water management, parks and recreation, beach and water access, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and beach nourishment. Emergency medical services are provided by a non-profit corporation (utilizing a combination of paid and volunteer staff) under contract to the Town. These Town services are supported by an administrative staff, which provides supervision, finance, tax administration, risk management, data processing, and personnel services.

Public water is provided by a private, non-profit corporation. The vast majority of the residential and commercial structures within the Town utilize on-site wastewater (septic) systems, with a few package wastewater treatment plants also in use.

As required by North Carolina General Statutes, the Town adopts an annual budget for all Town activities and departments. Annual appropriations are established for all General Fund activities, beach nourishment activities, and other special revenue funds. All annual appropriations lapse at the fiscal year end. The Town also utilizes several multi-year capital project funds that remain active for the entire planning, design, and construction period of a particular project. All budgets are prepared using the modified accrual basis of accounting.

The Town is organized into the following departments and associated department objectives:

Administration – The department's primary objectives are to lead the Town governmental organization to accomplish important community objectives, to document the Town's official actions and maintain accurate records of the Town, and to safeguard the financial resources of the organization. Additional objectives are to achieve a stable and strong financial position by accurately estimating, prudently allocating, and managing financial resources. The department also provides project leadership for various major capital initiatives.

Police – The department's primary objectives are to continue providing public safety coverage, outstanding public relations, community involvement, and quick emergency response as the Town grows and develops. The department's staff operates at a high level, has enhanced public safety, and continues to improve community relationships.

Fire – The department's primary objectives are to protect the public's health and safety and prevent / limit property damages. The department continues its commitment to professionalism through proper training requirements, certifications, reliable equipment, and the retention of quality professionals. Each shift is now composed of 4 firemen. The Fire Department maintains an ISO rating of four (4).

Public Works – The department's primary objectives are to promote the functionality, safe use, and aesthetics of the Town's infrastructure. The department coordinates the Town's solid waste collection efforts, maintains the Town's street and sidewalk network, maintains the Town's storm water management system, and maintains all Town facilities in a quality manner.

Planning and Inspections – The department's primary objectives are to assist in the development of land use regulations and ensure proper enforcement of land use regulations and North Carolina building code requirements to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare, and to promote an attractive community with a high quality of life. The department reviews all development plans in the Town for consistency with the

applicable requirements, performs required on-site inspections, and also facilitates new policies or changes in Town policies.

Parks and Recreation – The department’s primary objectives are to develop and manage programs and facilities designed to enhance the public’s enjoyment of the beautiful natural environment in Emerald Isle, promote healthy lifestyles, facilitate athletic endeavors, promote life-long learning opportunities, and promote community interaction and involvement. The department operates a Community Center with various athletic facilities and programs, and other recreation programs, maintains the Town’s beach and sound access facilities and park facilities, provides grounds maintenance in the NC 58 corridor, maintains the Town’s extensive bicycle path network, and coordinates large and small-scale community events.

Financial Management –

Internal Controls. The management of the Town is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure designed to ensure that the assets of the Town are protected from loss, theft, or misuse and to ensure that adequate accounting data are compiled to allow for the preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The internal control structure is designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the objectives are met. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that: (1) the cost of a control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived; and (2) the valuation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management. Internal control evaluations occur within the above framework, and we believe the Town’s internal accounting controls adequately safeguard assets and provide reasonable assurance of proper recording of financial transactions.

Budget Controls. In accordance with North Carolina law, the Town’s budget is prepared on the modified accrual basis, and its accounting records are also maintained on that basis. Under modified accrual accounting, revenues are recorded when they are both measurable and available. Expenditures are recorded when a liability is incurred, except for interest on long-term debt and accrued vacation benefits.

Independent Audit. North Carolina General Statutes require an annual independent financial audit of all local government units in the state. Williams • Scarborough • Smith • Gray, LLP, a firm of independent certified public accountants, has audited the financial statements of the Town of Emerald Isle. The auditor’s report on the financial statements is included in the financial section of this report.

Economic Outlook for the Town of Emerald Isle

The local economy is fueled by the tourism, construction, and real estate industries, and also by the accumulated wealth of our many retirees and second home owners. Additionally, the close proximity of MCB Camp Lejeune and MCAS Cherry Point also fuels economic growth in our area.

With the continued improvement in the regional and national economies, the Town has experienced steady economic growth in recent years, and this trend is expected to continue. Because of the Town’s desirable coastal location, the long-term economic outlook for the Town also remains very positive. The public demand for coastal living and vacation experiences remains high, and “the beach” remains Americans’ favorite vacation destination. The Town has invested appropriately in its most important asset, the beach, with a strong commitment to beach nourishment. The Town has also worked hard to maintain its competitiveness against other beach communities by adding other amenities to strengthen its position. The Town’s commitment to a small-town, family beach atmosphere and strategic initiatives are all designed to maintain and enhance Emerald Isle’s desirability for both residents and visitors. In addition, the Carteret County Tourism

Development Authority operates an aggressive marketing campaign to promote the entire area, including Emerald Isle.

The Town relies on several key indicators to gauge the status of the local economy and the likely impacts on the Town's budget and financial position, and all of the key indicators indicate significant growth in the past decade (despite the recession in late 2000s) and continue to trend up for the foreseeable future. Room occupancy tax revenues continue to increase significantly, with FY 2015 room occupancy tax collections representing the highest collections in history. Sales tax collections also continue to increase annually. FY 2015 sales tax collections increased 13.5% over the prior year, reflecting increased spending by our permanent residents and second homeowners, and also increased tourism activity. After experiencing several down-years, the local construction industry appears to be experiencing modest increases, and the continued improvement in the regional and national economies should promote additional new investment in Emerald Isle and the entire area. Real estate values also appear to have finally stabilized, and the Town's total assessed value is expected to continue to grow in the future. Finally, the stock market continues to experience record highs, which is providing additional disposable income for our numerous retirees, further enhancing the local economy.

The Town effectively managed the economic and financial challenges of the past several years, and maintains a solid financial position. The local economy remains stable and is poised for continued modest growth in the future, and should enable the Town to achieve its community and financial goals.

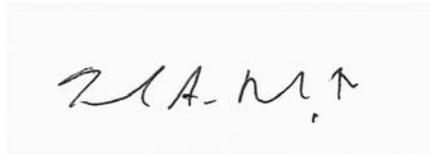
Awards and Acknowledgements

The Town was previously awarded (for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2014, and 2013) for the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting given by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR that satisfies both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable program requirements.

A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that our current CAFR meets the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program's requirements, and we are submitting it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for a certificate.

The preparation of the comprehensive annual financial report on a timely basis was made possible by the dedicated services and cooperation of Williams • Scarborough • Smith • Gray, LLP, the Town of Emerald Isle staff, and the support and leadership of the Mayor and Board of Commissioners. It would not have been possible without the combined efforts of everyone involved.

Respectfully submitted,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank A. Rush, Jr.".

Frank A. Rush, Jr.

Town Manager

This Page Intentionally Left Blank.

**Town of Emerald Isle, North Carolina
List of Principal Officials
June 30, 2015**

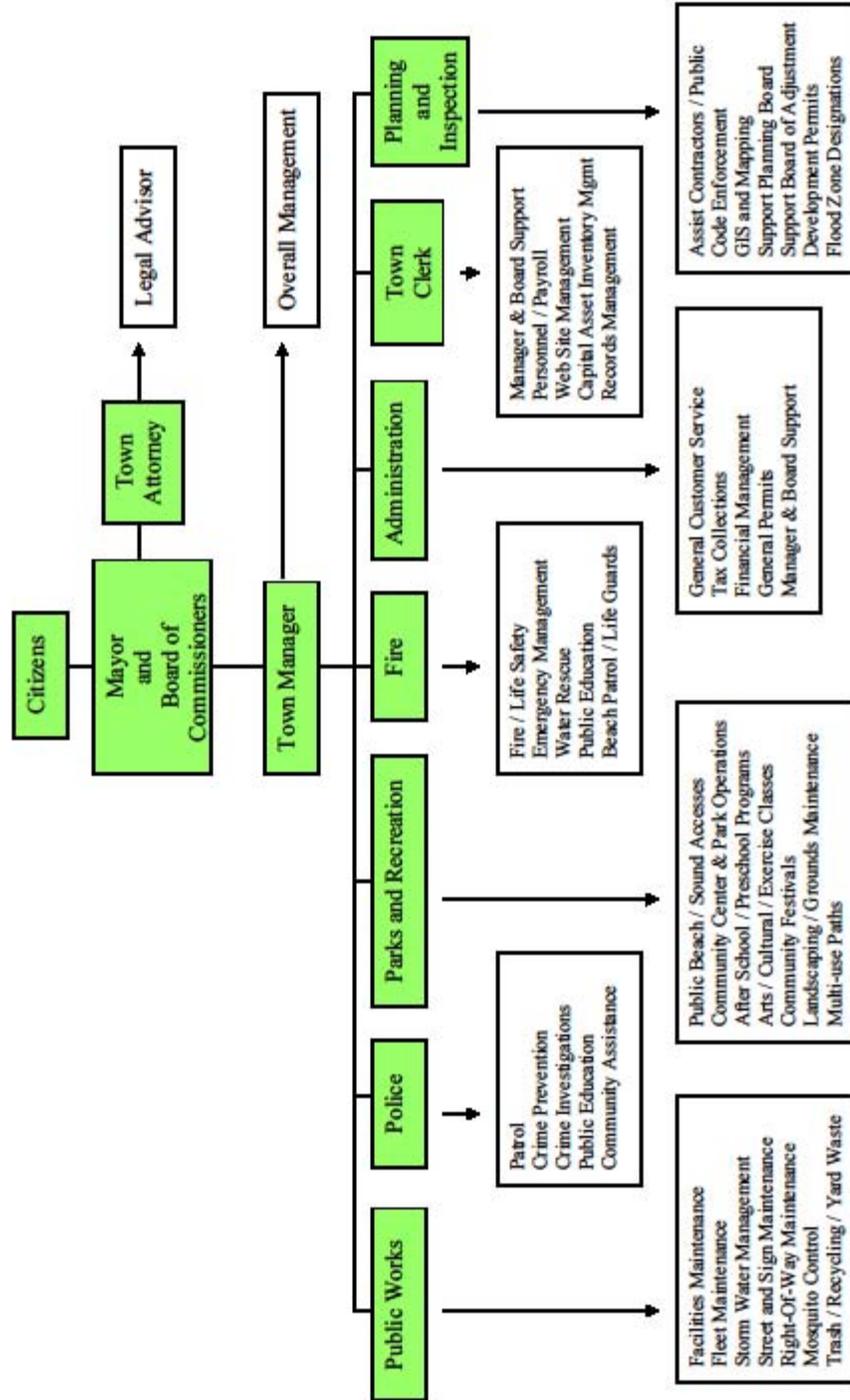
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Honorable Eddie Barber, Mayor
Floyd Messer, Jr., Mayor Pro Tem
Tom Hoover, Jr.
Jim Normile
John Wootten
Maripat Wright

ADMINISTRATION

Frank A. Rush, Jr., Town Manager
Laura E. Rotchford, Finance Director
Rhonda C. Ferebee, Town Clerk / Human Resources Officer
Jeffrey D. Waters, Police Chief
William W. Walker, Fire Chief
John "Artie" Dunn, Public Works Director
Josh Edmondson, Town Planner
Alesia F. Sanderson, Parks and Recreation Director
Richard L. Stanley, Town Attorney

**Town of Emerald Isle
Organizational Chart**





Government Finance Officers Association

**Certificate of
Achievement for
Excellence in
Financial
Reporting**

Presented to

**Town of Emerald Isle
North Carolina**

For its Comprehensive Annual
Financial Report
for the Fiscal Year Ended

June 30, 2014

Executive Director/CEO