

Upcoming EVENTS & CONCERTS

The Recreation and Aquatics Center is operating at full capacity with plenty of splashing in lap swim and water aerobics classes in the lap pool. In addition, pickleball and open basketball continue through the fall with an adult flag football league starting this winter. Don't forget, the fitness center has extended hours for all your workout scheduling needs.

The Recreation Center offers Child Watch, Toddler Time, and Teen Room programs as well as special events such as Kids Night Out and Sleighed it. Mark your calendars now for the Concert in the Park Series, *Light Up the Night Holiday* event from 5-8 pm on Dec 3rd, and Winter Camp for kids held during school vacation.

For more information and updated schedules and programs, please call the Recreation Center at 727.841.4560.

CONCERTS IN THE PARK 2022 Schedule Located at Sims Park

All concerts will be from 7 - 8:30pm

Saturday, Jan. 15, 2022:
MAJESTY OF ROCK

Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022:
FOR THE LOVE OF CASH

Saturday, Mar. 5, 2022:
SIMPLY TINA

Saturday, Apr. 16, 2022:
ALMOST ABBA

Name The Alley Contest

Alleyways are places of great possibility, bringing neighbors together and serving as pathways that connect residential and business destinations. To encourage more public purpose, the City is reclaiming and cleaning up its alleys. Some commonly think alleys only serve as convenient places to locate trash. However, their potential is much greater as they offer hidden opportunities for a myriad of pedestrian, bicycle, and other community uses. The naming of alleyways is an important step of this process as these spaces will gain official addresses in their transformations into welcoming walkable areas worth rediscovering.

The City needs your help naming nine public alleys. To be considered, suggestions should follow a common theme and should not contain the names of states or presidents as these are already represented in the city's street grid system. Submissions must be received by Friday, January 7, 2022. The winner of the contest will receive a \$250 Publix gift card and a commemorative street sign. To submit a name, please email City Clerk Judy Meyers at meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org. Help build a better sense of neighborhood and submit your idea today!

Earn a High School Diploma and Career Certificate

The New Port Richey Public Library is offering adults the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and a career certificate in majors such as Child Care and Education, Commercial Driving, Food and Hospitality, Office Management, and more.

Made possible through a partnership with the State of Florida's Division of Library and Information Services, the combined resources from the New Port Richey Public Library and Career Online High School will help ensure student success so adults can advance their careers, prepare for workforce entry, or continue their education.

To be considered for enrollment, applicants must have a library card, have completed at least one year of high school, take an online self-assessment, and have an in-person interview.

Once enrolled, Career Online High School pairs each student with an online academic coach who provides ongoing guidance throughout the coursework- all at no cost! Students should expect to complete the program in five to 18 months.

Contact the New Port Richey Public Library at nprlibrary@nprlibrary.org or 727.853.1262 to get started!



TEAM MEMBERS WANTED

The City is dedicated to building the community through employees that have a sense of belonging and are valued for their contributions and perspectives. Are you interested in joining the team?

If so, please visit www.cityofnewportrichey.org to view a current list of available positions.



CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY
5919 Main Street | New Port Richey, FL 34652

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THE BRIDGE

cityofnewportrichey.org

12th Edition | December 2021



Turning the Page to a Renovated Library



Board Members from the Library Advisory and Friends of the Library Groups took swing. From Left: Peter Segall, Mark Vandenbroek, Ron Becker, Joan Nelson Hook, Jeanie LeFebvre, Jayne Brevin and Andi Figart, Library Director

The library has seen many changes over its past 101 years, and the current renovation demonstrates the City's commitment to providing excellent resources and services for all library members.

This transformation began over a year ago with a Space Needs Assessment that included multiple community focus groups and plenty of surveys. Williams Architectural firm worked closely with city staff to design plans that capitalized on the library's strengths and aligned them with the community's needs.

On April 15, 2021, under the supervision of Hennessy Construction Services, members of the Library Advisory and Friends of the Library Boards and library staff got the honor of taking the first swings of the demolition phase. The library has remained open during all renovation phases, offering access to library resources and services

with almost no interruption. The dynamic new library is taking shape as each set of upgrades is completed with plumbing and HVAC, elevator, electrical and data, furnishings and finishes, and the rooftop solar array. When paired with an adaptable floorplan, intuitive hands-free services, and more public meeting spaces, this reimagined community space will offer expanded opportunities for people to connect, learn, and grow.

You are officially invited to take part in the Library's Ribbon-Cutting Celebration in the new year! For more information about this event or assistance with any of your library needs, contact the dedicated New Port Richey Public Library staff at 727.853.1279 or www.nprlibrary.org.



Citizens Academy

Are you a community-minded New Port Richey resident who wants to learn more about the inner workings of your city? If so, consider enrolling in the City's Citizens Academy. Participants of this eight-week program will meet at varying locations at 6 pm on Wednesdays beginning January 5, 2022. There is no cost to participate, and the class size is limited to 35 people. Apply early as these classes are perfect for involved citizens who are interested and vested in the city's future.

Participants will learn how local government is organized and how services are funded and delivered. The program includes topics such as Community Vitality, Dollars and Sense, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, and Environmental Sustainability. Graduates of the academy will be invited to attend a City Council meeting where they will be presented with a diploma, city spirit polo shirt and coffee mug.

If you or others are interested in building a better community through this enriching experience, complete an application at www.cityofnewportrichey.org and submit it to City Clerk, Judy Meyers, at meyersj@cityofnewportrichey.org.

Website and Social Media

It is easier than ever to keep up to date with everything that is going on in the city! Connect with us via Facebook at the following:

- The City of New Port Richey City Hall @CityNPR
- New Port Richey Recreation & Aquatic Center @nprparksandrec
- New Port Richey Public Library @NPRPublicLibrary
- New Port Richey Fire Department @newportricheyfiredept
- New Port Richey Police Department @nprpolice

Want to see what's happening downtown? Then check out our Downtown NPR page at @downtownnpr

Connect with the City via the City's Twitter and Instagram account, and keep up-to-date on events and news with our website www.cityofnewportrichey.org. The City app is also available for download through the App Store or Google Play.

Did you know that all City Council meetings and work sessions are live streamed? Click on the link from our Facebook page or go directly to the site at <http://newportricheyfl.swagit.com/live>. You can also watch previous meetings by clicking the appropriate tab at the top of the screen.

Interested in attending a City Council meeting? All meetings and work sessions are open to the public. Regular meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month beginning at 7 pm. Work sessions are scheduled as needed.



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

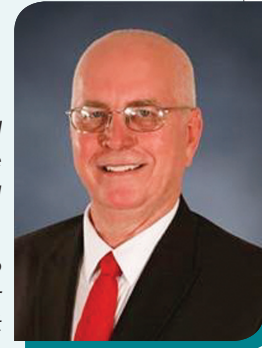
Did you know that the City of New Port Richey has an Environmental Committee? This may come as a surprise as most municipalities do not have a formally established committee dedicated to environmental issues and concerns. Established in 1989 and reactivated in 2011, this volunteer committee seeks to develop ecological understanding and promote environmental stewardship. The committee works closely with city staff on projects and planning related to the ecological health of New Port Richey, advancing sustainability and improving resiliency. In addition to its other projects, the committee serves as the Arbor Board of the City, oversees and administers the City's urban agriculture program, endorses and supports various events consistent with its mission, advises the City Council on ecological issues, and recommends policies and programs to restore the City's natural systems.

The committee encourages all residents to commit to protecting the natural ecology of our community by doing such things as starting a vegetable garden at your home or joining others at a community garden. Studies show that gardening improves diet and health, promotes neighborliness, strengthens communities, and restores natural ecologies.

The Environmental Committee meets on the second Monday of the month at 6 pm at City Hall. If you are interested in joining, download the board and committee application from the City's website at www.cityofnewportrichey.org

MAYOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,
As we say hello to fall, I invite you to experience all our wonderful city has to offer.



It's a great time to go outside and visit our beautiful parks, get active by taking a new class at the Recreation and Aquatic Center, or share great times with friends while enjoying the Concert Series in Sims Park.

The Library Improvement Project is due to wrap up by the end of this year. If you have not done so already, I invite you to stop by to see the renovated second floor and take a sneak peek at the new Children's Library, learn about rooftop solar panels, or even borrow seeds for your fall plantings. We cannot wait to see the finished project, although we will miss the cool tunnel entrance!

And if celebrating with friends sounds just right, then invite them all as there's plenty of parking in the newly renovated Thomas Meighan and Gloria Swanson Parking lots. Now you are just steps away from enjoying all that our downtown area has to offer, including two new restaurants that will be opening early next year. Read more about them on page 3. After parking in the new parking structure, soon you will be able to hop on our new EV shuttle, conveniently carrying you to and from the downtown area.

I am pleased that we have featured two city employees in this issue of the newsletter. Officer William Milana and Captain Eric Slafky are certainly great examples of the many fine city employees on staff. I hope that you will enjoy the articles and wish them well in celebrating their well-deserved successes.

Whether you are a resident or just visiting, I hope you enjoy being in a caring community with a small-town atmosphere and big city advantages.

Sincerely,
Rob Marlowe
Mayor



New Ladder Truck



The City recently welcomed the delivery of a new ladder truck to their fleet, the first piece of fire fighting apparatus added since 2014. Over a year of planning was devoted to the design process to ensure that E-One of Ocala, the truck manufacturer, built the truck to meet the City's specific needs.

The ladder truck arrived in late June, and the Fire Department couldn't be more pleased with how it turned out. The 2021 E-One is on a Typhoon chassis and features a 75-foot ladder, 500-gallon water tank, and a pump with a 1,500 gallon per minute capacity. In addition, the new ladder truck contains the latest technologies, including ground ladders, hose, power tools, and a full complement of "jaws of life" extrication tools for rescue incidents. The ladder truck is also equipped to provide Advanced Life Support medical care by the Firefighter Paramedics assigned to the truck.

On July 9, 2021, the New Port Richey Fire Department hosted a traditional "Push-In Ceremony" dedicating the new ladder truck. The event was well attended by City elected officials, dignitaries, current and retired firefighters, and neighboring firefighters and fire chiefs. The Fire Department Chaplain, Phillip Sherwayne, started the event by blessing the new ladder truck, followed by comments from the Mayor and members of the City Council, the City Manager, and the Fire Chief. Then, following tradition, retired firefighters anointed the new ladder truck by wetting it down with water from the old ladder truck. The event concluded with all attendees pushing the new ladder truck back into the fire station bay. The new ladder truck is currently in-service at Fire Station #1 and will be providing service to the City for many years to come.

OFFICER MILANA WELCOMED BACK FROM DEPLOYMENT

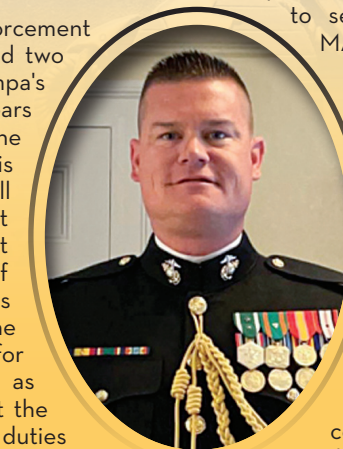
The police department is proud to welcome back Officer William "Bill" Milana from extended military service deployment/activation.

Growing up in a law enforcement family with both parents and two siblings working as Tampa's finest, Bill served twelve years in the United States Marine Corps before following in his family's footsteps. In 2016, Bill Milana joined the New Port Richey Police Department while taking on the role of Major in the US Marine Corps Reserves. Two years later, he received activation orders for what was initially intended as a nine-month deployment at the US Embassy in Jordan. His duties included hosting a three-star General and the coordination and facilitation of all Marines, gear, weapons, and ammunition

into and out of Jordan. As relations with Iran elevated and his activation was extended, Officer Milana continuously took on more responsibilities until being selected to serve as Aid-De-Camp to the MARCENT Commander.

For his service during this extended activation, Officer Milana was presented with a Meritorious Service Medal and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device, indicating a Mobilization in support of Contingency Operations.

Officer Milana's courage, discipline, and sense of duty to our country is to be commended. The New Port Richey Police Department is thankful he has returned to us to continue in his law enforcement career.



CITY MANAGER'S LETTER

Dar Neighbors,

It is hard to believe that the fall season is already upon us! This edition of the Bridge has information about events and activities that provide entertainment, enrichment, and invaluable social connections. The fall and winter seasons bring cooler weather and time for you to step out and enjoy our walkable city and city parks. Mark your calendar now for the lineup of great concerts and holiday events in Sims Park (Page 5).

Our fiscal year officially began on October 1, at which time City Council's priorities were implemented. Adopted annually, you can learn about the priorities for the Fiscal Year on Page 4. In addition, some of the previous priority successes, such as strengthening the Downtown, are reflected in the continuing growth you currently see.

Another vital priority showcases how we connect the city with our community. I'm confident you will find many new ways to become involved with your local government such as our new Citizens Academy. Read more about this great new program on the cover.

Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community. This statement is evident when you read the spotlights on City Staff, Officer William Milana, and Captain Eric Slafky. They exemplify just part of what makes New Port Richey a special place in which to live, work, and raise a family. They are exceptional employees and a true credit to their respective departments.

I am sincerely grateful for our community, and as a reminder, I am always available to you.

Sincerely,
Debbie L. Manns
City Manager



TWO UP-AND-COMING DINING VENUES ANNOUNCED FOR 2022



The City of New Port Richey continues to attract new businesses to highly visible, accessible, and historic downtown locations. In addition to being home to beautiful parks and a vibrant downtown full of bustling small businesses and community activities, the city is a place where fun and food marry nicely. While there are many favorite downtown dining options, two up-and-coming restaurants are generating plenty of buzz as future dining options.

Zen Kitchen and Bar

The Zen Forrest restaurant is relocating from its current address at the intersection of Rowan Road and SR 54 to a newly renovated location at 6229 Grand Boulevard. In addition to the many dining entrees we have come to love, acclaimed Chef Victor Wang will also bring a new vibe and a uniquely flavored dining experience by dishing up a fusion-inspired menu to include brunch and a full bar with late-night tapas. Chef Wang and entrepreneur Jay Patel are busy renovating their new location, which formerly housed Gatsby's Hideaway and Café.

Seafood Restaurant and Bar

Frank Starkey, architect and local entrepreneur, is cooking up a new culinary venture. A chef-driven restaurant specializing in local seafood cuisine will add an upscale dining experience at the entirely renovated building located at 5734 Missouri Avenue.

Designed to complement New Port Richey's historic buildings, the restaurant will have roll-up glass doors and sidewalk café seating. Whether dining inside or out, this yet unnamed food haven promises incredible potential with creative menu options, cocktails, craft beer, and a hand-curated wine list.

Both Zen Kitchen and Bar and the Seafood Restaurant have aggressive renovation goals and plan to provide a modern atmosphere at Missouri Avenue and Grand Boulevard. Foodies and fine food enthusiasts should expect their doors to open in the first half of 2022. So if you like to sink your teeth into a variety of cuisines, you'll want to make your way downtown to enjoy these new culinary experiences.

Fire Department Captain is an Ironman Competitor



New Port Richey Captain and previous Firefighter of the Year, Eric Slafky, completed 20 weeks of grueling training in preparation for competing in the Florida 70.3 Gulf Coast Half Ironman competition. Captain Slafky competed in the event and achieved more than he had set as a goal: qualifying for the Ironman World Championship Competition held in St. George, Utah. After another 20 weeks of training and 4 AM mornings, he and his family traveled to Utah for the championship. Captain Slafky thanks his wife, family, and friends for their support throughout his rigorous training regimen. The City of New Port Richey congratulates Captain Slafky for his outstanding determination, preparation, and perseverance while competing in the World Championship Ironman Competition!



COMING SOON to a park near you: AIR POTATO BEETLES

Known as one of Florida's most invasive plant species and appearing on the FDA's Noxious Seed List, citizens should remove the Air Potato to help protect beautiful natural areas. The Air Potato plant spreads quickly. Its heart-shaped leaves and vigorously twining vines can grow up to 60 ft in length. Although difficult to eliminate, people have done so by digging up the plant's tubers and destroying its bulbs. However, since their introduction in Florida in 2011, Air Potato leaf beetles have joined the cause. These beetles voraciously feed only on the Air Potato's leaves, which makes this insect a growing success story. Distributed throughout Florida at over 2,000 release sites, these beetles have been released twice in the James E. Grey Preserve and once in Frances Avenue Park.

The Florida Department of Agriculture collects air potato infestation reports to help control the Air Potato vine. With conservation and preservation areas receiving priority shipments of the Air Potato leaf beetles, the James E. Grey Preserve, Frances Avenue Park, and Madison Street Bridge will receive a large shipment of beetles to release at all three locations.

For more information on the Air Potato, visit <https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/dioscorea-bulbifera/>



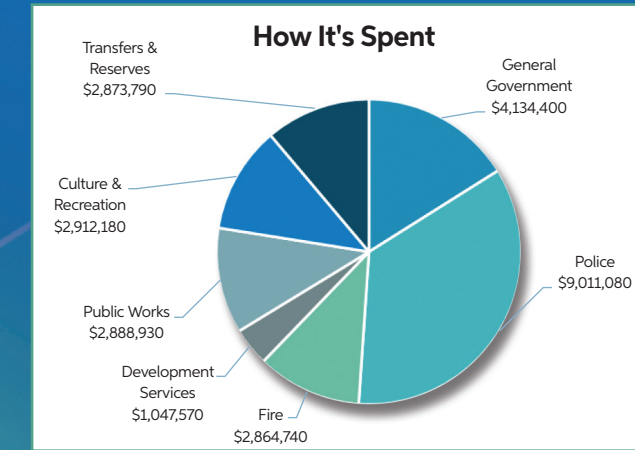
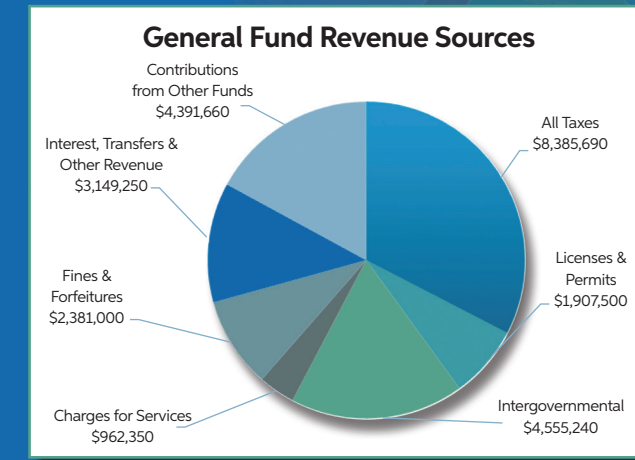
Photo of Air Potato Beetle By: Shannon Carnevale

FY2021-2022 BUDGET IN BRIEF

The Budget is the City's annual financial plan that details how programs and services will be funded based on estimates of revenues and expenditures. Each year the City Manager, along with city staff, prepares the annual budget, taking into consideration input from the community and direction from the Mayor and City Council.

The City's General Revenues for FY2021-2022 totals \$25,732,690. Considering the community's demands and needs, while also being aware of the financial capacity of our taxpayers, the millage rate has been lowered from 8.7500 to 8.5000 mills. This will generate about \$5,844,570 of property tax revenue for the City.

The City spends the revenue on community needs and services that enhance the quality of life and offer lifestyle opportunities for its residents and taxpayers. The charts to your right represent the key areas of expenditure.



Your City Council

(BACK ROW)
Deputy Mayor, Chopper Davis
DavisC@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Matt Murphy
Murphyrm@cityofnewportrichey.org

(FRONT ROW)
Mayor, Rob Marlowe
Marlower@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Mike Peters
Petersm@cityofnewportrichey.org

Councilperson, Pete Altman
Altmanp@cityofnewportrichey.org

