

Solid financial ground

Continued from Page A1

sands of dollars to restore the church building.

He said 2021 was a year the city faced many expired employee contracts, some of which had been expired for five years with eight new contracts renegotiated.

After decades of debate and countless attempts to start the project, construction of a new, state of the art firehouse is underway, well within budget and selected and paid for by the citizens of Cape May, is underway, Mullock said.

Footings for the new firehouse have been poured by a Cape May contractor. Mullock said the project was on schedule to be completed in an 18-month timeline.

The city hired environmental counsel to deal

with legal issues on Lafayette Street Park. He noted the city is demolishing two houses on St. John Street on property that will be part of the park.

He thanked the Fund for Cape May and other donors to Soldiers and Sailors Park which was completed in 2021.

Road repairs will be expanded in the next few years to keep a 40-year schedule of repaving every road in the city, Mullock said.

The city is preparing for a major expansion of the water desalination plant. He said council is reaching out to state and federal officials to obtain funds from the federal infrastructure bill.

Studies of nuisance flooding on Elmira, Venice and Bank streets have

been commissioned, Mullock said.

The city has set a goal of opening a new parking lot at the Welcome Center providing 20 parking spaces, by July 1.

The state Department of Environmental Protection approved a widening of the city's Promenade between Primal Restaurant and Convention Hall. Mullock said the city received a bid for the work for \$103,000.

"All of these accomplishments are community accomplishments that have had support and endorsement by the citizens of Cape May," he said. "We have had these successes because we have tapped into the extraordinary abilities of the citizens of our community."

Mullock said the residents' collective protection of the beauty of Cape May have made it one of the most renowned communities in America.

"Our job is to keep it that way, we must protect our town from natural disasters by increasing our efforts for flood mitigation, and by protecting the town from overdevelopment," he said. "We can protect our community by simply continuing those efforts. But we alone cannot do that alone."

When you become mayor, you are not given a magic wand, you need the support of the community, Mullock said.

"And I am asking for that support from the citizens of Cape May," he said.

Mullock said all the con-

tracts, projects, capital expenditures that were undertaken in 2021, were done without a tax increase. He said council planned for a zero-tax increase in 2022 with projects moving forward and

as well as "reasonable and well-deserved salary increases for our employees."

"We do this with good, professional, and fiscally responsible planning," Mullock said.

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