



# Ballantrae Newsletter Online

From the Ballantrae Community Development District in Land O' Lakes, FL

November 19, 2020

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## CDD to reopen park amenities on Nov. 23 with special anti-virus rules

County data allowed the CDD Board to vote at its Nov. 18 meeting to finish what it started on June 3 – the reopening of all Ballantrae amenities under [CDC](#) and [WHO](#) health and safety guidelines, and the state and county rules based upon them.

Reopening on Nov. 23 will be the clubhouse, park playground areas, the basketball and volleyball courts plus Straiton pool. All will be open for their regular hours. Usage will be capped at 37 for the park pool, 12 at the clubhouse and eight at the Straiton pool. Pool users must bring their own chairs.

**HEALTH. ECONOMY.** Those are the world's major concerns as it deals with the pandemic. Here's a look at how those two issues affect our CDD.

Reopened June 3 were the open park, park pool and tennis courts.

For amenities to stay open, normal rules plus the special rules in the box at right, posted at the clubhouse, park and Straiton pool, must also be followed.

CDC and WHO guidelines say the local Covid-19 positivity rate should be

on “a downward trajectory” at or below 5 percent for two weeks before these additional amenities should be opened.

But there are many [ways to count positivity](#), according to the CDC:

- Under the state's original counting system, Pasco's Covid-19 test positivity rate stalled at 10 percent daily from July 26 until the state abandoned that system in early November.

The state quietly started a new

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## CDDs expect full funding despite virus impact

Elected officials and their constituents in many jurisdictions – from the federal government down to the smallest of towns, cities and CDDs – worry how the virus will hurt their receipt of tax revenues needed to finance

their government budgets and provide important and necessary services to their residents,

Most government fiscal years begin Oct. 1 in Florida. Pasco County Tax Collector [Mike Fasano](#) begins collecting real estate taxes in November for, among others, the county, school district and CDDs. Taxes are due by April 1. If still unpaid, Mr. Fasano's office holds a [tax certificate sale](#) in June to collect unpaid real estate taxes.

Mr. Fasano said he received tax payments from 695 of Ballantrae's parcel owners in just November of last year. Ballantrae has 971 parcels. Many of those tax bills are paid from escrow held by mortgage holders taking advantage of the 4 percent discount for early payment. No Ballantrae taxes went uncollected.

The 2020-21 fiscal year is the 12th year in a row the CDD Board has maintained the assessment rates set for the 2008-09 fiscal year.

The 2020-21 budget [detailed here](#) totals \$1,683,065. It includes \$1,024,660 in the General Fund, \$557,421 in Debt Service and \$100,984 to offset county collection costs and early payment discounts. A four-page “blue section” provides brief descriptions of each budget line to help understand it.

## To our residents:

The Ballantrae CDD Board has opted to experiment with an online newsletter that will be fresher in content and cheaper to produce than the paper edition it would replace.

We hope to maintain a 1-2 page online newsletter every 2-3 weeks in place of spending \$10,000 annually on the 16-page paper quarterly edition.

This online newsletter is more than these two pages. It links the virus story atop this page to six pages of CDD plans and COVID-19 policy. The budget story above links to 10 pages of CDD financial data you might also find of interest in exploring CDD finances.

The [Ballantrae HOA](#) agreed to send an email to the 870 or so residents on its email list to let you know when each issue of Newsletter Online is posted to the CDD website at [ballantraecdd.org](#).

Send any story ideas to the editor at [jimflateau@ballantraecdd.org](mailto:jimflateau@ballantraecdd.org).

## Rules to reopen amenities

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ballantrae CDD members and their guests use CDD amenities at their own risk and are to:

- Maintain social distance outdoors of six feet, except for family members, or when playing on tennis, basketball or volleyball courts.
- Limit outdoor social gatherings to 50 people or less and maintain social distance of six feet between them.
- Observe pool deck tape markings for chairs to maintain social distance. Park pool capacity is capped at 37 while Straiton cap is eight people.
- Adhere to clubhouse capacity of 12 people to maintain social distance of six feet between them. Consider holding large gatherings in the park instead. That will avoid invoking Pasco Executive Order mandating [wearing of masks](#) indoors.
- Wash hands regularly. Wipe down surfaces to be touched such as playground hand rails and tunnel floors, park tables, and swing seats and chains. They are cleaned each morning with soap and water by staff.

Amenities will remain open as long as these and all other posted rules are followed. Access card privileges may be suspended for those not following them.

# CDD to reopen park amenities ...

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counting [system](#) on Oct. 29, the day after the CDD's monthly meeting,

The CDC said it approves of the new counting system because, among other things, it is consistent with counting in effect in other states.

The change was in the factors included in the top (numerator) and bottom (denominator) numbers in the fraction used to arrive at the positivity rate.

- The "rolling weekly" system of averaging seven-day numbers is another counting system the CDC approved.

The CDC said that system "was calculated to smooth expected variations in daily counts."

For example: a lab might report half of Monday's test results for Tuesday's count but the other half for Wednesday's. That means Tuesday's tally would be an undercount (a "valley") and Wednesday's count an artificial high (or "peak").

Averaging daily numbers over a week's time eliminates many peaks and valleys, the CDC said.

Pasco County District 3 Commissioner Kathryn Starkey publishes a weekday Covid-19 newsletter you can request via [email](#). It uses Florida Health Department data in the "rolling weekly average" system. It includes Pasco's weekly numbers shown in the chart at right.

Her newsletter came to the Board's attention for the first time at its Nov. 18 meeting.

It noted that the data in the chart above, created by the CDD, shows 9 of 12 recent weeks were at or below 5 percent positivity. The CDC's two-week "downward trajectory" was not only met in August, Board members saw, but reached 21 days, from Aug. 16 to Sept. 6. There is only one outlier, in the first week of November testing.

The report shows Land O' Lakes has seen 1,643 Covid cases through Nov. 10 in its population of about 37,000 (4.4 percent) while ZIP code 34638 has confirmed 749 cases among its approximately 20,000 residents (3.8 percent).

The Board noted that the CDC allows adjustments to its guidelines that are not "written in stone." Board members agreed Health Department data in Starkey's newsletter indicates that Pasco had generally met the basic CDC guidelines for reopening more of Ballantrae's amenities in a manner that the CDC says is safest for our residents and their guests. That's the reason for new rules on page 1.

The Board also noted residents and their guests are observing social distance and gathering size rules at the amenities reopened on June 3 as directed by the CDC and detailed in the Board's Plan and Policy [linked here](#).

Amenities that remained closed after June 3 included:

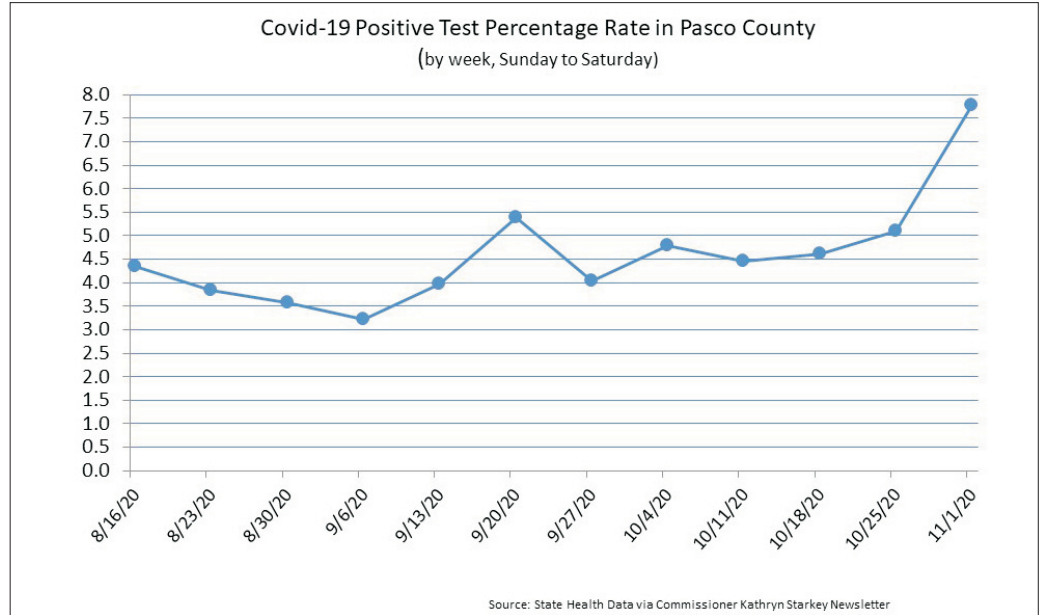
- Basketball and volleyball courts remained closed, due to the physical and ball contact that is part of those sports.
- The playground and swings remained closed due to fears someone could wipe infected sputum on them and another person could make contact with it.

- The clubhouse remained closed due to social distance and to limit crowd size. It will now be limited to a capacity of 12 people to maintain a social distance of six feet between them.

- The Board closed the Straiton pool due to low usage and to reduce pool monitor costs.

Nearly 600 Straiton townhome residents/guests – roughly seven people daily – signed in to use the park pool between its June 3 reopening and Labor Day. In the two months since then, only 43 people from Straiton – averaging fewer than one a day – have used the park pool.

As winter days got shorter and colder, the park pool also gets fewer daily visitors – an average of about 88 daily from June 3 to Labor Day has dropped to 14 daily in the two



months since. In raw numbers, 7,349 residents and guests signed in June 3 to Labor Day at the park pool, versus 857 in the past two months, excluding all those from Straiton.

That's led to a reduction in the number of daily two-hour swim sessions from five to two.

Each of the five pool sessions each day were limited to 37 people. The 37 slots were often filled by groups of 4-6 or so people who were family members and/or friends.

That meant if one person tested Covid-19 positive and contact tracing was ordered, there was little chance that patient would know on their own all the other people and groups who were at the pool during any particular swim session that could have included as many as 37 people.

As a result, the CDD paid pool monitors to take the names and addresses of all participants in all swim sessions so it could provide that information, if asked by the Health Department. No such requests have ever been made.

The [state announced](#) it now plans to do less tracing in the future. It will leave testing and paying for it to localities.

The pools are reopening with an expectation that low occupancy will continue through winter. The Board expects those groups can report their membership if needed to tracers. The same is true for groups using the basketball, volleyball and tennis courts. Parents should be able to recall names of those they meet at the playground. Users of the clubhouse should be able to provide names of attendees.

Staff will perform morning cleanings of high-touch areas at newly-reopened amenities just as they have been cleaning those at amenities reopened earlier.