

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE LADY LAKE TOWN COMMISSION
LADY LAKE, FLORIDA
April 18, 2016**

The Special Workshop Meeting of the Lady Lake Town Commission was held in the Commission Chambers at Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida with Mayor Ruth Kussard presiding. The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- 2. ROLL CALL:** Tony Holden, Commissioner Ward 2
Dan Vincent, Commissioner Ward 3
Paul Hannan, Commissioner Ward 4
Jim Richards, Commissioner Ward 5
Ruth Kussard, Mayor/Commissioner Ward 1

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Kris Kollgaard, Town Manager John Pearl, I.T. Director; and Nancy Slaton, Deputy Town Clerk

3. Information/Distribution of Handouts Regarding Fiber Wide Area Network (FiberWAN) (John Pearl)

I.T. Director John Pearl stated that staff would like the Commission to consider if the building of a fiber wide area network (FiberWAN) is worthy of further investigation at this time. He stated the purpose of this meeting is to briefly explain and distribute information to prepare the Commissioners for a proposed FiberWAN workshop prior to the next scheduled Commission meeting. Mr. Pearl reviewed the proposed advantages of building a FiberWAN as follows:

1. Improved reliability and capability of the current Town-wide area and SCADA networks.
2. Potential future public/private platform that service providers would utilize to deliver lower cost, higher quality bandwidth services to businesses in Lady Lake.
3. Potential asset to attract businesses to the Town; to build a more diversified local economy.

The desired outcome of the future FiberWAN workshop is a decision to proceed with soliciting a proposal from a third party to prepare a comprehensive broadband plan. If approved, this plan would enable the Town to budget to begin construction in the next fiscal year.

The scope of this plan would include cost estimates, the development of a network plan to connect all Town facilities, as well as the utility infrastructure and standards and specifications. With the expected road widening project of US Hwy 27/441 approaching, an opportunity exists to begin building this network at a considerable cost savings. A comprehensive broadband plan would prepare the Town to take advantage of this opportunity.

Lastly, this plan would provide direction on the creation of a “dig once” policy that the Town could implement to provide further cost savings.

The documents provided for the Commission's review represent an effort to prepare the Commissioners to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks associated with the building of a FiberWAN.

Town Manager Kris Kollgaard stated that she and Mr. Pearl discussed this and felt the best approach would be the introduction and explanation of this subject at this short meeting. She stated two examples have been given; one where a municipality has phased it in, and another that went full bore with it all at once. She stated that after the Commission has reviewed the documentation provided, a workshop meeting will be held before the next Commission meeting to discuss the pros and cons.

Commissioner Richards asked if the study of Leesburg has been included in the documentation as they put in their fiber network in 2000, and it stretches almost to Clermont and almost to Lady Lake, and would be competition.

Mr. Pearl replied that Leesburg's fiber network has been referenced in several documents. He stated they have 185 miles of fiber in the ground and their chief advantage, which would set them apart from the Town, is that they put the fiber in with their electric utility.

Mayor Kussard asked if there is an idea of the costs involved with this proposal, and if it would be proposed to be in next year's budget if approved.

Mr. Pearl replied there is basic idea, but a study would be proposed at the workshop to give staff the actual numbers, and he has estimates prepared for review. He stated it is his proposal to move forward next year if the Commission approves, but it would be their decision. He stated staff would target moving ahead to coincide with the US Hwy 27/441 road widening project; to have plans in place prior to the FDOT's final study to commit to the project. Mr. Pearl stated the idea is to "dig once" to save a lot of money by installing conduit and infrastructure when the ground is moved.

Mayor Kussard commented that the road widening is proposed for 2019.

Ms. Kollgaard remarked that if the Commission chose to move forward with this project, it would be done in phases. She stated the Town would not bear the costs all in one year, but would be phased out, perhaps over five years.

Mayor Kussard stated it sounds like it will be very expensive if the cost will be phased out.

Mr. Pearl reviewed the documents that were included on the thumb drive for the Commissioners. One of the documents was the cost estimate, which goes along with the FiberWAN conceptual map drawn up using GIS data. He stated it goes down to Lake Ella Road and includes connection to all of the Town's SCADA (water and wastewater assets) systems, including lift stations and wells.

Mr. Pearl explained that the cost projections were provided in three different columns estimating \$5.00/ft., \$9.00/ft., and \$20/ft. He stated that the \$5.00/ft. cost represents the best estimated cost if only the conduit and hand-holds (basic infrastructure without fiber) are installed in the ground when it is turned. This is what it would cost for the US Hwy 27/441 trunk of 22,000 ft. at \$5.00/ft. done in conjunction with the road widening. If conduit and fiber were installed at this time, it would cost approximately \$9.00/ft. or \$200,000 (the best

cost savings) as opposed to a cost of \$20.00/ft. or \$440,000 if the Town would try to dig it up in the future at some point. Mr. Pearl stated he would like to see the Town put a policy in place for "Dig Once"; that the Town would at least put in conduit, at a minimum, to save money in the future if a FiberWAN is agreed upon whenever major projects are occurring. There was further discussion regarding the costs.

Mr. Pearl pointed out that there are two other directories on the thumb drive which include documents, the proposal and the plan, for the Clermont FiberWAN project and for the Winter Haven model. He stated that the Clermont model would more closely match what the Town would do as they do not have their own electric utility and proposed a municipal broadband network, with the possibility of expansion in the future. Winter Haven is different in that they already had miles of fiber in the ground and were estimating the costs involved in becoming a fiber communications utility. Mr. Pearl stated this would be the next evolution in becoming a municipal network, with the ideas, costs, and risks associated with that. He stated there are also a couple of samplings of other models, press articles, and negative examples which include the City of Dunnellon. He stated it appeared they tried to do it all at one time and to finance it with debt.

Mayor Kussard agreed that a workshop should be scheduled for the Commission after they have had a chance to look at the information.

Commissioner Hannan asked if businesses could connect to the fiber network once it was in place, and then pay the Town. He commented that fiber networks have been in place since the 1950's, and asked when it would be old technology.

Mr. Pearl replied that it would not be included in the proposed first phase as it would only connect all of the Town's infrastructure, but it could be pursued in the future. He stated his opinion is that he remains extremely bullish on fiber in the ground that is locally controlled, and although wireless technologies are getting better, the physics of satellite communications and atmospheric propagation will never change.

Ms. Kollgaard confirmed with the Commission that a workshop will be held in two weeks prior to the next Commission meeting at 6 p.m.

4. ADJOURN: There being no further discussion; the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Kristen Kollgaard, Town Clerk

Ruth Kussard, Mayor

Minutes transcribed by Nancy Slaton, Deputy Town Clerk