

# WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

February 10, 2022

Shout Outs this week go to Pam Winegardner and her staff in the Finance Department. This week we were notified by the Government Finance Officers Association that for the year ending September 30, 2020, we were awarded the "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for the 26<sup>th</sup> year in a row! This Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. Congrats Pam, Debbie, Becky, Dawn, and Michelle!

**Mayor Rietz, Thad Carroll and I attended the Joint Planning Meeting with Municipalities** on Monday morning in Leesburg. The 2-hour discussion with the 14 Mayors and Managers in Lake County, and with the Lake County Board of Commissioners, was an information-seeking and sharing meeting. This type of meeting has never been done before and was well attended with each municipality sharing their issues. **The key question was how do you want to grow in the future?** Issues that were common with the municipalities were work force housing, roads, and traffic. We also discussed working together in the future, which would be another first. The Town of Lady Lake, like other municipalities in Lake County, is professionally managed by professional staff who do a great job dealing with growth management issues. Lake County currently is the fourth fastest growing county in Florida.

**Lady Lake Police Department** was recognized on Friday by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody. The Thin Line Tribute recognized K9 units with the Lady Lake Police Department and Lake County Sherriff's Office.

I had conversations with Chief Tempesta this week about our UCR (crime clearance rate). The national average is generally around 21%. He provided stats that showed a consistent 47% to 49% clearance rate on criminal cases. The Chief also provided court case depositions which indicated that we also have a high conviction rate. Our Police Department is busy, and they are doing a great job. Being a former Law Enforcement Officer, I am very proud to be associated with this fine group of professionals who dedicate their lives to public service and keeping our community safe.

**Lake County City/Town Managers Lunch:** Jennifer Barker, Lake County Interim County Manager, discussed a proposal to partner with the Ocala Metro Chamber Partnership. On 1/25/2022, the Partnership gave a presentation to the Lake County Board of Commissioners suggesting that a private-public partnership with Lake County, and with municipalities in Lake County, be

established for future economic development. The cost would be based on the municipality's population with the first year costing \$2.00 per resident; Lady Lake would pay \$32,000. I told them that to my knowledge, Lady Lake staff has never been contacted by this group.

**CLERK'S OFFICE** (Nancy Wilson):

Busy week in the Clerk's office. We had a Commission Workshop and a regular meeting on Monday and the post processing of those meetings has been completed. We compiled and generated packets for the Planning & Zoning meeting. Several advertisements were submitted to the Daily Sun for the February 23, 2022, Commission meeting. Aside from that, we were busy processing records requests, lien requests, and providing assistance to the many new people who have moved into the area. Carol is working with Lori Crain on the Special Magistrate agenda.

**FINANCE** (Pam Winegardner):

The Discretionary Sales Surtax Expense report was filed with the Lake County Advisory Board on Wednesday. The Sales Surtax Oversight Advisory Committee in Tavares was created to review the expenditures of the revenue generated by the sales surtax to ensure the surtax revenue is being used only for purposes specified in the November 6, 2001, referendum, and in Lake County Ordinance 2001-123. The surtax was approved for renewal in 2017 and will expire December 31, 2032.

Lake County collects sales tax of 6% plus a surtax of 1% for a total of 7% and disburses it at the end of the month after the month it is collected. Lady Lake is estimated to receive 2.641222% of the total sales surtax (total for Lake County is \$54,848,276) or \$1,448,665 in Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Last year (FY2020-2021), we were estimated to receive \$1,448,261 but received \$1,648,054 which means purchasing was healthy in Lake County.

Surtax cannot not be used for payroll, maintenance and repairs or operations. It can be used for infrastructure, road paving (not patching), technology, vehicles, and other new purchases.

The Advisory Committee meets at least twice a year with government recipients of the surtax revenue and reviews both the budgeting of the surtax use and the expenditure of the surtax. Questions are asked of each government recipient, if necessary, and corrections or expanded explanations are submitted to the report. Lady Lake has not had any problems with our use of this surtax. We discuss anything in question with the Town's independent auditor or with members of the Advisory Committee. Lady Lake has used the surtax to mainly fund police vehicles and paving five miles of roads each year and plan to use funds for the Old Dixie Walking Trail, the new Growth Management building, a new roof for Town Hall and possibly, if needed, to assist in paying for the expansion of the Wastewater Plant in process through 2023.

As a side note, Lady Lake streets are rated a B+ for paving conditions which earns our Public Works Director and his right-hand man, Ted Williams, a bigatta boy!!

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (Thad Carroll):**

The development order for the Christian Food Pantry, a 431 square-foot Building Addition, a 120 square-foot Aluminum Cover Structure, a 96-foot Concrete Ramp with Landing, a 104-foot Concrete Slab, a 120-gal LP Gas Tank was issued on Wednesday. Also issued Wednesday was the development order to construct a 12-foot wide, 2,500 linear feet multi-use trail featuring 114 parking spaces including 5 ADA Florida accessible parking spaces, four 10-foot by 10-foot pavilions, four benches, two drinking fountains, two access points, and one public restroom, on a 9.97-acre parcel located at the southwest corner of Old Dixie Hwy and Lady Lake Boulevard. Both items were approved at the Monday, February 7, 2022, Town Commission meeting.

The building department received revisions for a partial interior remodel for the Kohl's Department Store, and revisions were approved the Ye Olde Thrift Shoppe for exterior finish improvements, replacement of roof structure and waterproofing, interior improvements including partition walls with doors and windows, and minor electrical modifications. A permit application was also received for the TD Bank drive-thru canopy in the Lady Lake Commons Shopping Center, and the Eyeglass World permit was issued which will occupy the same outparcel in the development.

Staff issued 84 permits over the last week, and 93 inspections were conducted in the field. Three residential landscaping inspections and one commercial landscaping inspection as well.

**HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee)**

Human Resources will be attending the Spring 2022 Job Fair on Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. The Spring 2022 Job Fair is hosted by Lake Sumter State College Career Development Services. The Town of Lady Lake has several job opportunities that HR is currently working on filling. For more details, please visit our website at [www.ladylake.org](http://www.ladylake.org). A group of Town employees are in the process of creating a team for Relay for Life. If employees are interesting in joining, please contact Julia Harris or Tamika DeLee for more details.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (I.T.) (John Pearl):**

Our annual hardware lifecycle project has been the focus of our efforts this week. IT (John and Leon) are testing and implementing various new deployment, management, and security tools. I am very pleased with our progress.

The community development software implementation project continued with the Building Department (Malina, and Becky), IT (Leon and Patrick) and the vendor Citizenserve. Staff

anticipate that an updated test environment will be delivered soon incorporating the many change requests collected over the past couple of months.

The GIS water system field verification project continued this week with Patrick in the field collecting GIS coordinates for various utility assets.

#### **LIBRARY SERVICES** (Marsha Brinson)

AARP tax preparation continues at the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-12. You must have an appointment which can be made at [www.villagestaxaid.com](http://www.villagestaxaid.com). The preparers are processing between 20-30 returns daily and have reported that everything is going well. This is a great service to the community, and we are pleased to have them at the library. The library also has basic tax forms at the circulation desk.

Aly Herman, the library's reference and technology librarian attended a reference and collection management ZOOM meeting on Wednesday. The group discusses new trends in library technology and reports on their library's activities including collection development.

Best Buy's Geek Squad will be here on Friday morning for a workshop devoted to Apple products, from phones to tablets and laptops. They assist with questions and are able to give individual help. The class is limited in size, so they request you pre-register at the library.

The Youth Library has been busy this week. Pre-school story time is every Wednesday at 10:30am. Kids enjoy stories, music, and movement activities. Scarlett, our R.E A D. dog also visits on Wednesday afternoons. On Thursdays, Nicole and Kourtney teach a homeschool class, this week will be a lesson on the history of Valentine's Day. Miranda will facilitate a Lego Masters program on Friday afternoon. Kids may use a blueprint, or they can free build, but they work together on the projects. This is a great lesson in team work as well as fostering originality.

A big shout out to the entire library staff who use their talents and creativity to make the Lady Lake Library a success.

#### **PARKS AND RECREATION** (Mike Burske)

The Parks and Recreation Department has been performing general maintenance to include mowing, trimming and trash detail. We are continuing to work on installing the sunshades at the Dog Park. We poured the footers to the first sunshade on Tuesday. Eight yards of concrete was used. Van will lead the assembly of the first sunshade on Monday. Brad has been leading the crew in preparing the baseball fields for the Spring Season. We have had issues of drainage on a couple of the fields which we have been addressing.

Brad, Sam, and Dillion have done an incredible job restoring four of the soccer goal nets that were mentioned in last weeks' report. They were able to make four goal nets out of the six original goal

nets. I expect that they will work well until the next budget year. I have ordered goal nets for them from Epic Soccer which should be in tomorrow. Sam and Dillion also were able to install the new flagpole outside of the Historical Society Building. This pole replaced one that broke recently.

The Parks Director has had a few park patrons voice concerns over other visitors allowing their dogs to run free and relieve themselves on various recreation areas at the Rolling Acres Sports Complex. This will be discussed with the Town Manger in the near future. We have many patrons who pick up after their dogs and are responsible, but I have also witnessed those leaving presents behind. Unfortunately, they are not very friendly when asked to pick up after their pets.

I have been working with Hunter Signs to get banners for the Mac and Cheese Cookoff and the Easter Egg Hunt. I want to thank Julia on an awesome poster for the Easter Egg Hunt. The Chamber of Commerce has 11 teams signed up for the Mac and Cheese Cookoff. Not bad for the first year. I predict that it will be a smaller event, but I have found that those are the most fun and have a small-town feel.

Since the Fall I have been soliciting donations for the fireworks in 2023. I have been fortunate to have Benchmark donate \$5,000.00 so far for the fireworks and they will match the donations we raise up to \$5,000.00. The Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club has bought the naming rights to the fireworks for \$20,000.00. We will have a check presentation for the first \$10,000.00 this Spring and another in January of 2023 for the sum of \$20,000.00. I will use the first \$10k check to call in for the other \$5,000.00 from Benchmark. I have an anonymous donation of \$1,000.00 with an additional \$1,000.00 donation forthcoming. I have been notified that another organization is voting on their donation for this event, as well. We have collected just over \$1,000.00 for the 50/50 raffle, half of the total amount collected will go to a lucky ticketholder! I receive many donation pledges for this event that I look forward to receiving.

Soccer practice started this week with around 220 kids signed up this year. Cliff and Christina from the Soccer Association have done a great job getting the season started. The contractor should be there to re-do the tile at the Rolling Acres Concession Stand when the tile comes in, late this week or early next week. They will be working overnight to finish the project.

#### **POLICE DEPARTMENT** (Chief Robert Tempesta)

**Announcement:** Police Officer Jonathan Goehring will start on Monday, February 14, 2022. He will be sworn in as a police officer with the Lady Lake Police Department this upcoming week. He has three years of previous experience with the Lake County Sheriff's Office and 4 years with Florida Department of Financial Services in the Division of Investigative and Forensics Services.

The next scheduled Physical Agility Test and written exam will take place on February 23, 2022, at Lake Technical Institute of Public Safety. There are currently 2 open positions. Please visit

<https://www.ladylake.org/departments/human-resources/police-officer-vacancy-announcement> for more information. Interested applicants can obtain an employment application on-line. Please submit all applications to Tamika DeLee in Human Resources.

**Public Safety:** As peak tax season approaches, be aware of any suspicious activity regarding your personal information. The IRS has reported incidents of tax fraud from victims. There are victims reporting that they are attempting to file their taxes and are being rejected as their social security number has already been used by someone else. With on-line methods for banking and shopping being more popular, it is important to safeguard your personal information. Shred all documents that you no longer need prior to discarding them.

If you are a victim of tax fraud, you will need to file a police report with your local law enforcement agency and then with the IRS providing them with your case number. The IRS will investigate the fraudulent activity. It is a good idea to check your credit history periodically through Experian, Equifax, or TransUnion to ensure that you are not an unsuspecting victim.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS/UTILITIES DEPARTMENTS (C.T. Eagle):**

##### **Maintenance Department (Ted Williams, Supervisor):**

Continued performing inspections of new roads, sidewalks, and stormwater inlets being installed at the Lake Ella Estates Project.

##### **Streets (Kon Scott, Travis Lacey, and Justin Wallace - Lead Operators):**

Patched potholes and road cuts. Litter pickup around Town is ongoing. Performed tree trimming around Town.

Crews cleaned off storm drains around Town to stay ahead of the rain events.

Travis' and Justin's crews continued tree trimming and general right-of-way clearing on Oak Street between Clay Avenue and Rolling Acres Road.

Kon's crew also continued working on cleaning up the right-of-way on West Lady Lake Blvd for vehicle access.

##### **Facilities Maintenance (Albert Rachel, Lead Operator and Eric Welcome, Operator II):**

Staff coordinated with the Emergency Generator Service Contractor, Ring Power, this week to perform the semi-annual inspections and maintenance for all of the Town's generators at various facilities.

Continued replacing interior and exterior lighting at the Library, Town Hall, and Public Works.

Continued working on landscaping at Town Hall and the Library.

##### **Motor Pool (Joe Grubb, Lead Mechanic and Billy Kohler, Mechanic):**

Continuing service and repair of the Town's fleet and equipment.

**Utilities – Water and Sewer** (Thomas “Butch” Goodman, Supervisor):

Completed Utilities Availability Requests from prospective developers, Certificate of Occupancy close out requests, purchase orders, and work orders.

**Distribution and Collection Systems Field Operations** (Robert Barnes, Lead Operator):

The supervisor and field staff are in continuing and ongoing coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation contractors (Southland) and engineers (Metric) regarding the US 27/441 Road Widening Project. Utilities relocation work by the contractor continued at the south end of town this week.

New utilities installation inspections and testing continued at Lake Ella Estates.

Future potential development projects coordination is ongoing with the Growth Management Department.

**Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants** (Daniel Mykeljord – Lead Water Plant Operator, Darryl Flanders – Lead Wastewater Plant Operator, and Steve Pfouts – Dual Certified Plant Operator)

Phase One of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications Project work continued by the contractor, SGS. Final stages of work are wrapping up for Phase One of the project, weather has slowed the painting portion, and the contractor is still awaiting large parts delivery. The large mixers did show up this week and are on site. Tentative completion date for Phase One has been pushed back to March due to materials delivery dates. Phase Two plans and specifications for bid are on the agenda for Town Commission consideration on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Phase Two is the large phase of the project that consists of construction of a new treatment plant along with other major improvements that were previously reviewed and approved by the Town Commission.

Phase One of the Well #4 and #5 Project, Citrus Well Drilling has completed the well casing installation for the Well 4 site and preparing to commence work on the Well 5 well casing installation next week. It was good to see the drill in the ground this week. Phase Two documents and design will be brought to Town Commission for consideration to bid once work is underway on Phase One. Phase Two consists of the construction of a new ground storage tank, new high service pumps, and other major system improvements.

**Administration:**

The connector road between Caroline Avenue and Spencers Lane property purchase was discussed at the last Town Commission Meeting. Staff is currently contacting the property owner as directed to reopen discussions.

The Utilities Agreement with the Benchmark Group for the sewer line extension on CR 25 from Fennell Blvd to Griffin Avenue has been finalized. This sewer line extension is a part of the Lady Lake Apartments Project which will extend sanitary sewer service along CR 25 from Fennell Blvd to Griffin Ave, while also improving collection system operations of two other lift stations. The developer will be funding their portion of the project and the Town will be funding the system improvements not related to the development project. The Town's portion of the costs will be offset by the Sewer Impact Fees collected for the Lady Lake Apartments Project, meaning that the entire project will pay for itself. This agreement is on the Town Commission Meeting agenda on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for consideration.

Thanks go out to Burske, Thad, Wendy, John, and Nancy for assisting in putting together the RFQ for Engineering and Consulting Services scope for advertisement that is on the February 23<sup>rd</sup> Town Commission Agenda for consideration. This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is advertised every 5 years or so, to establish continuing services contracts for Engineering and other consultants. The scope of services is revised as the Town grows and different services are needed by the various Town Departments.

The Utilities Department currently has 2 job openings, Utilities Collection/Distribution Technician I and a new position, Lift Station Mechanic. Please see the Town's website or contact Human Resources for more information.

Reminder that updated information regarding the FDOT US 27/441 Road Widening Project can be found here <https://www.cflroads.com/project/238395-5>. Questions and concerns can also be submitted via this website. Work has resumed on this project after last week's shut down.