

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

February 8, 2024

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

Shout out this week goes to Police Chief Steve Hunt. Chief Hunt has been getting press coverage on his ability to modernize the Lady Lake PD. One such instance was the much-needed replacement of our dash cams and tasers. The department also did not have body cams, so he and his staff did their research then presented their findings to me. We worked with Pam Winegardner, Finance Director, and found the money to finance the purchase of body cams. Chief Hunt presented the equipment proposal to the commission who approved the purchase. The purchases have been made, the officers have been trained and they are currently using the equipment. Chief Hunt was on Channel 2 Orlando at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday. Our recruitment numbers are up as we continue to look for a few great candidates. Great Job Chief Hunt!

Managers Meeting was held Tuesday morning to discuss developing core values, a mission statement, and a strategic plan for the Town of Lady Lake. Brett Meade is our facilitator at this meeting. We discussed our goals and worked on developing the town's core values. We will expound on those core values at the next meeting.

Lake County Managers Association meeting was held last Thursday. We discussed employee wages and police wages. These topics were centered around the City of Leesburg and the Town of Lady Lake. We explained our immediate needs, research on wages and how we funded the salary increases. Some of the cities are not experiencing the same issues.

CLERK'S OFFICE (Nancy Wilson):

This week I attended two meetings. One was about establishing our core values. Until recently, I felt exercises where identifying core values, establishing an identity, and branding were all fluff with no real added value. However, since attending a Clerk's luncheon in Groveland where they have gone through the process of identifying values, creating a mission statement, developing a strategic plan, and branding, I began to see the value in going through the process. Groveland has a cohesive message that staff has embraced. It was energizing to listen to the department managers talk about how they work together to promote their common goals and vision for the future. At our first meeting this Tuesday, everyone in the room threw out a core value that is important to them in our work environment. After hashing it out, three were selected: teamwork, community, and integrity. At our next meeting, we will discuss those

values further and start working on our Mission Statement. I am now onboard and feel this is a valuable exercise, especially if our values are continually reinforced and not forgotten as time goes on.

The second meeting was with Civic Clerk, the company that is training us on their Agenda Management software. Once implemented, this will make it a lot easier for the public to find meeting information quickly and easily on our website. Like I have said before, I do not think this is going to save any time for the Clerk's, but it will be a professional and effective way to present agendas, minutes, video, etc. Civic Plus is the umbrella under which Civic Clerk will reside and I believe they will both go live at the same time.

The first three weeks of the month are particularly busy in the Clerk's office because it is back-to-back agenda preparation and minutes transcription. We had a Commission meeting on Monday, prepped for the Planning & Zoning and Parks & Recreation meetings, began compiling agenda items for the next Commission meeting and in the next few days, Code Enforcement will begin compiling cases that are to be heard at the Special Magistrate meeting. We will then generate an agenda that remains fluid until a day or two before the actual meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

This week, I attended the Town Commission meeting and our Tuesday Department head meeting with facilitator Brett Meade, who is leading the team in establishing our mission, vision and values, with the ultimate goal of developing a strategic plan. Brett was inspiring, and the directors were fully engaged in the task at hand.

I also attended the Wellness program. Kudos to HR for coordinating an expert presenter.

Our Facebook page reach for January was 17,700 (+11.9%) – all organic with no paid ads. We averaged more than one post a day with 36 posts and 4 stories last month.

For two consecutive months, Farmers Market-related posts have been our top-most popular Facebook posts, and the Market continues to receive media coverage weekly. The vendors have expressed satisfaction with the level of promotion, and we are getting new vendors each week and an increasing number of visitors – this week topping 600. Way to go, Jackie and the Parks & Rec team!

On Wednesday, I met with Event Coordinator Amy Alicea, and we worked together on promotions for upcoming events. She is seeking to add several new events to the Town calendar, which will require increased community outreach on the part of Communications. I'm excited to collaborate with her and look forward to great things ahead.

I responded to several media requests this week and issued one press release on [Commissioner Roberts graduating FLC's IEMO class](#). Congratulations, Commissioner!

Chief Hunt was featured on WESH 2 discussing the PD's new body cams and recruitment efforts. Chief Hunt was well-prepared for the live interview and represented the Town and the PD wonderfully! The placement was a direct result of proactive outreach. The Town again has seen an influx of police applications after the body cam press release and subsequent media coverage.

Saving the best news for last, I would like to welcome part-time Multimedia Content Specialist Susyn Stecchi to the Town.

Susyn is a veteran of the U.S. Army and has over 30 years of combined experience in both the public and private sector. She has worked in multimedia roles for the Hillsborough County Clerk, Orange County utilities, and the City of Pompano Beach, to name a few. She specializes in digital outreach, design, website management and accessibility.

With Susyn's expertise, the Communications Department seeks to implement live streaming and digital signage, increase community engagement through video and photography, promote transparency, and continue to build on recruitment efforts, to name a few.

It is important to note, we created a similar, full-time position in the Communications Department during my tenure at Lake County. It quickly proved to be one of the most valuable positions to the team.

FINANCE (Pam Winegardner):

Finance will be starting the budget process for the next fiscal year. This year will span October 1, 2024, through September 31, 2025. In developing our budget, we must consider the amount of service we need to provide to our growing town and how to meet that growth without sacrificing our small-town feel.

We have seen our police department calls go from 13,096 in 2014 to 19,302 in 2023, traffic accidents were 408 in 2014, now up to 726 in 2023. In our building department, our annual construction value has gone from \$36,044,724 in 2014 to \$114,231,519 in 2023. Our library circulation has grown from 123,563 library materials check out in 2014 to 178,274 in 2023. These statistics are presented in our Annual Financial Report, which gives the public an idea of our growth and operating indicators.

We have maintained the same millage, 3.3962, for the past seven years after having reduced the millage the year before that in 2016. Our population has grown since 2014 to 2023 by 14.7% with an expected explosion with the new projects in process now.

We track to ensure there are plenty of services to offer all our residents, current and future. These 5- and 10-year plans are updated every year.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (Thad Carroll):

Growth Management distributed comments this week pertaining to the site plan for the Hammock Oaks Amenity Center. The project will be located within the Phase 1A portion of the Hammock Oaks on 2.76 acres and proposes the following: an amenity building, pool, cabana with bathrooms, pavilion, dog park, and a playground.

The building department issued certificates of occupancy for the Van Patton House Lofts located at 996 Del Mar Drive. There are seven apartment units and one office unit. Building plan revisions were also approved this week for Building 1 and 2 of the Rolling Acres Reserve Apartments located at 850 Highway 466.

There were 125 building inspections conducted this week and 32 new permits were issued. Code enforcement opened 18 new cases, closed 13 cases, and conducted 40 inspections on properties with open cases; 8 snipe signs were also removed from the Town's right-of-way.

I'd like to extend my special appreciation this week to our Code Enforcement Officers Lori Crain and Denise Williams. Their work is not an easy task, and there is much paperwork and communication that is required with the job. Additionally, it is fair to say that often they are not well liked by those property owners to which they issue citations. Nonetheless, they continue with their duties to help keep neighborhoods tidy, structures safe, and make our community a better place to live. Thanks for all of your hard work ladies; it does not go unnoticed.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

No report this week.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

Staff are involved in multiple ongoing enterprise software and information security projects.

An Internet service outage occurred on Monday morning impacting various municipal services. The disruption was caused by damaged fiber and continued for 12 hours.

Patrick, Leon, Thad and John met with Greg Holcomb and other Lake County staff on Tuesday afternoon to begin efforts to improve address change management and communication between our organizations.

Request for Proposal 2024-001 for Fiber Wide Area Network construction services was advertised on DemandStar on Tuesday afternoon. Proposals are due March 12.

Andy, Howard, and John met with Police staff and vendor Axon on Wednesday afternoon to begin the technical implementation effort for the vehicle mounted electronics. We have received our equipment and expect bench testing to begin on Monday next week.

Howard, Leon, and John began the SANS SEC401 Security Essentials certification program this week. This self-paced program is expected to continue through April.

LIBRARY

Last Thursday, I attended the Lake County library directors meeting held in Tavares. I find these gatherings incredibly valuable for exchanging ideas and brainstorming with fellow directors from our county's libraries.

Tuesday was the first day of the AARP Tax-Aide program. They were able to help 26 people in our community file their taxes. If you would like assistance to help file your taxes, appointments are mandatory and can be made at, www.villagestaxaide.com, as walk-ins are not accepted. Additionally, the library has received the 2023 IRS tax forms and booklets.

Today, we are joined by Mary Flynn, a former Hallmark Greeting Card writer, as she shares heartwarming stories and takes us behind the scenes of Hallmark.

Shout out goes to Nancy Brock. Nancy does all the ordering of materials for adults as well as hosts the book club. Her customer service is outstanding, and patrons always ask her for book recommendations because she is well read. Thank you, Nancy, for your hard work!

Here are the stats for youth this week.

Video Games - 13

Baby Storytime - 9

Tiny Tots - 15

Family Crafting- 13

Storytime - 44

Reading with Scarlett - 17

Remember to check out our Facebook page for all the upcoming events:

www.facebook.com/lakelakelibrary225

PARKS AND RECREATION (Mike Burske):

This week, the Parks and Recreation Department has been working with daily maintenance to include mowing and trash detail. Vicky, Sam, and Van were able to make very quick work of the mulching at the playground. We are beginning work, as we have time, to remove a large tree

branch that fell from The Villages property behind Shared Harvest on the far side of the Driving Range. This will take us some time to fully remove.

The items that will be brought to the next Commission meeting will include the location of the fireworks, conceptual plan for the Recreation Center, updated five-year C.I.P. and playground renovations recommendations.

As mentioned in a previous report, we have two areas where we can launch fireworks. The first one is the site where we launched last year. The back up site is from the Driving Range or the Soccer fields. These are the only two suitable areas in Town. We have the money budgeted for the fireworks. Our goal is to offset the cost through sponsorship. This may or may not pay for the full show. I am currently working on getting sponsors lined up for the event. Last Friday, we had a verbal commitment for \$10k to help us offset the price of the fireworks.

Amy, our Events Coordinator has been working diligently on the Easter Egg Hunt and the Blues Concert. I want to thank Elisha, Communications Director, for working with her to get the flyers and propaganda in line for us to get ready for the events. We will have a lot of new events and ideas coming down the pipe. It is great to have the addition of an Events Coordinator.

We have our sports seasons right around the corner. We are ordering chemicals and preparing the fields. Both the Soccer Association and the Little League have paid their field usage fees for the upcoming season. We will be working on the field lights as we had seven bulbs go out during the off season. At this time, the fields have been trimmed and have a good appearance.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):

I met with our stakeholders from Lake County office of Probation, State of Florida Probation, State Attorney's Office Juvenile Division, and other local police agencies in reference to the WILA program (Work in Lieu of Arrest). This is a diversion program focusing on nonviolent first and second offenders. We have been involved in the program in the past and will continue to use it when appropriate in the future.

We have experienced a handful of stolen cars in the last few weeks. One of our stolen cars was pursued by a Marion County Sheriff's Deputy before it crashed at the Del Mar gate. We were not involved in the pursuit. Today Officer Eckerdt encountered two juveniles in the act of stealing a car (the second time in a week he has been on the scene). These vehicles failed to stop for the officer, and he discontinued the pursuit due to unsafe speeds. The car was then seen operating dangerously in the presence of a Fruitland officer. The same vehicle's tires were subsequently spiked by Lake County Deputy and the vehicle became undriveable near 466A. The two individuals were eventually taken into custody. They were charged appropriately and were taken to Lake County Jail.

I conducted a media interview with the Daily Sun and WESH TV in reference to the Body Worn Camera program and how it relates to our recruitment efforts.

As mentioned before, Officer Bakar will begin onboarding and field training next week. That will bring us up to 23 officers. We have three still pending in the end stages of the hiring process. We currently have five individuals scheduled to take the PAT and written exam on February 26. Interest has been steady.

We met with technicians from AXON and have received all of our dash cameras. The installation date is still 10-12 weeks out and have much to do in preparation, but we are getting closer.

PUBLIC WORKS/UTILITIES DEPARTMENT (C.T. Eagle)

Administration (C.T. Eagle -Director and Peggy Smith – Admin Assistant to Director):

Information regarding current Town Projects can be found here:

<https://www.ladylake.org/departments/public-works/town-projects/>

Public Works has job openings, please see the Town's website, or contact Human Resources for more information. <https://www.ladylake.org/departments/human-resources/>

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 the website. The projected full completion date is April of this year.

Maintenance Department (Ted Williams, Supervisor):

Performed multiple driveway apron inspections at Spencers Lane, Bolivar Street and Cierra Circle, coordinated with residents on concerns, coordinated with contractors and vendors.

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

Crews performed normal duties including patching potholes, litter pickup along roadways, cleaning storm drains, mowing right of ways, tree trimming, and patching road cuts.

Repaired and re-sodded leaking storm drain on Orchid Street.

Installed speed limit signs on Brevard Avenue and continued townwide street sign replacement project.

Cleaned up junk that was dumped behind Padgett Circle.

Facilities Maintenance (Truman Henson, Lead Operator, Scott Hammack, Operator I, and Phillip Perna, Operator I):

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Repaired toilets at the PD and the Little League Restroom. Repaired and replaced lighting at the Museum. Re-sodded areas in

front of the Chamber after the stumps were grinded. Started converting bad lighting in the PW Maintenance Shop to LED.

Continued performing mowing and landscaping activities at Town Hall, Public Works, and the Library.

Motor Pool (Billy Kohler, Lead Mechanic):

Continued servicing the Town's equipment and fleet vehicles as a one man show.

Utilities — Water and Sewer (Thomas "Butch" Goodman, Supervisor):

Completed Utilities Availability Requests from prospective developers, Utilities Connection Quotes, project plan reviews, Certificate of Occupancy close out requests, Backflow device verification audits, purchase orders, Monthly Operating Reports for the regulatory agencies, review of Right of Way Utilization Permits, and work orders.

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

Ongoing coordination on the Town's annual backflow device testing program.

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.

Completed numerous 811 dig ticket location requests and coordinated for GIS mapping.

Performed weekly fueling and testing of emergency equipment and generators.

Completed meter change outs, new meter installs, work orders, distributed cut off notice door hangers, re-connects, and performed service line repairs.

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

Completed wastewater plant and water treatment plant required regulatory agency compliance items and performed required sampling events. Coordinated and submitted lab results to FDEP. Performed process control sampling and made necessary plant operational adjustments.

Phase Two of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications Project is in process, is progressing, is on schedule, and is within budget. The projected completion date is Summer 2024.

Phase Two of the Well #4 and Well #5 Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project. Work is in process, is progressing, is on schedule, and is within budget. The projected completion date is by the end of June 2024. Continued work on the construction of the new 400,000-gallon ground storage tank at Water Treatment Plant #3.