

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

December 04, 2025

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

Shout Outs of the Week

Becky Higgins – Congratulations to Becky for taking the AICP Exam! AICP Certification is the only nationwide, independent verification of planners' qualifications. By earning this certification, colleagues and employers know you possess the academic background, relevant work experience, and essential skills needed to serve the community effectively. Great job, Becky!

Julia, Ted, Mark, and Josh – Thank you for setting up and assisting with the Town Hall Christmas Tree project for the Village Elementary School children. The students especially appreciated Santa's visit! This year marked the 20th anniversary of this event, and a wonderful time was had by all.

Department Manager's Meeting

Our Department Manager's Meeting was held last Tuesday. Topics included:

- Planning for the upcoming Christmas Party
- The January Mock Commission Meeting
- Bicentennial Celebration planning
- The Growth Management relocation
- Christmas decorations, which required teamwork across Public Works, Parks & Recreation, IT, Police, Finance, Library, and Growth Management
- The Finance Department is going through an annual audit and learning the new Springbrook software.

This period truly felt like a "perfect storm," but it provided an excellent opportunity to evaluate communication and teamwork. We pulled through, and although there is always room to improve, a special thank-you goes out to all departments for their hard work over the last several weeks.

We also began a discussion on ideas for increasing future revenues to help offset property taxes. This lively topic will be revisited in upcoming meetings.

Meeting with Dr. Paul Harsh First Baptist Church of Lady Lake

On Wednesday morning, I met with Dr. Paul Harsh. We had a spirited and constructive conversation, addressing several questions regarding rules and procedures. I explained my perspective on local government operations, and while we agreed on many points and respectfully disagreed with others, the dialogue was productive and positive.

CLERK'S OFFICE (Kathy Rosado):

A big shout-out to **Julia**, who has been working tirelessly to prepare for the Lady Lake Christmas Parade—all while running the Farmer's Market and juggling many other responsibilities. Thanks to **Amber** for also pitching in to lend a hand. Thank you both for your dedication and hard work!

Records Review & Year-End Destruction

This week, we continued our efforts to review documents in preparation for the end-of-year destruction deadline for 2025 records. Carol Osborne and I visited Public Works to review the storage area and assess the records currently housed in the warehouse. We now have **49 boxes** that have met their retention schedule.

We have established an account with **Stericycle**, which will be on-site on **December 30th** for a shred-fest. Now is the time to submit any records your department has that are ready for destruction.

NextRequest Training & Portal Launch

On Tuesday, we coordinated an administrative training session with **NextRequest**, which was well attended by 12 staff members who will be using the system. I am continuing to work on preparing the public records portal for launch and anticipate it will be ready to go live by the end of the year.

Clerk's Office Activity

Over the past two weeks, the Clerk's Office has:

- Sent out notifications for **two cancelled meetings**
- Posted **2 meeting agendas**
- **Completed the Special Magistrate meeting Minutes**
- Completed **17 lien search requests**
- Processed **13 public records requests**
- We attended the Wellness presentation on Fraud Prevention

Thank you to all staff for your continued support and teamwork as we move into the final month of the year!

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

This week, we attended the Police Department's fraud presentation in The Villages, virtual training on the public records portal, onboarding for new social media archiving, a meeting with the police chief to discuss future promotions, a wellness presentation, and a meeting with staff about office moves.

On Thursday, Susyn will attend the Animal Shelter program at the library. On Saturday, we will both work the Christmas parade.

Our Christmas events, including Light Up, the parade, the Library's Festival of Trees, and the upcoming Christmas Farmers Market, have gotten the following media coverage (This does not include print-only publications such as the Daily Sun):

- Total Number of media mentions: 53
- Total Online + Print Publicity Value: \$656,496

On Facebook, we surpassed 3,500 followers, achieved 373,436 views, and are up 183% from October.

We had the most growth month-to-month and one of our most successful overall months on Facebook in November. I attribute this to consistent, strategic promotions of the Centennial and Christmas events. Below are our monthly stats.

- Facebook Followers: 3,558 (+547)
- Facebook Views: 407,248 (+266.8%)
- Total posts: 76
- Content interactions: 5,659 (+210%)
- Our top Facebook post - a photo promoting Light up Lady Lake - had 152,827 views.
- 42% of our followers are Lady Lake residents, with the largest majority aged 35-44 (23.2%). This shows we are reaching families in addition to retirees.
- YouTube views were 8,122 (up by 102% over October). This can be attributed again to consistent content creation, including PD body cam video and Farmers Market shorts.
- The website also had one of the largest increases in users month to month, with 12k visitors in November. Interestingly, our calendar is in the top 5 most visited pages.

FINANCE (Joella LeDonne):

On Tuesday, December 2nd, the House State Affairs Committee voted along party lines to potentially move forward with four constitutional amendments that would reduce property taxes. Most of the proposals aim to exempt homestead properties from non-school ad valorem taxation, while preventing local governments from reducing law enforcement funds. Ad valorem taxes are property taxes. These annual taxes are levied by local governments, school districts, and some special districts that are used to pay for infrastructure and services like law enforcement, parks, fire districts, emergency medical services, roads, and more.

Where does the Town stand? Currently, the amount the Town receives in ad valorem taxes is estimated at \$6,803,446, accounting for 25.9% of the Town's annual general fund revenues. Even though the Town holds no debt, we must be very frugal without disrupting the level of service we provide for our residents. We all must remember that there is no such thing as a free lunch. You cannot expect to get something without giving something in return. We all must educate and learn what consequences may arise. To eliminate property taxes, a constitutional amendment is necessary, which requires 60% voter

approval. This presents a significant hurdle, as the amendment must first be approved by a supermajority in both the House and Senate before being placed on the ballot.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (Thad Carroll):

On Monday, we received revised plans for the Rooms to Go site plan. This project is located at the intersection of North Highway 27/441 and County Road 25 on the parcel which is currently being developed west of the highway.

Staff are working on the development orders for the proposed Chase Bank and Florida Credit Union. The Chase Bank is also located in the area of the intersection of North Highway 27/441 and County Road 25. Florida Credit Union is located within the Hammock Oaks Commercial Park on Highway 466.

The building permit was issued for new inground commercial swimming pool for Boulevard Oaks located at 1797 Flowertop Way. A permit was also issued for a new inground commercial swimming pool for Paradise Recreation Center located at 1403 Paradise Drive. An application and plans were received for a remodel of plumbing for a new retail space located at 138 South Highway 27/441.

The building department received thirty-one building permit applications or revisions this week, and twenty-one permits were issued. A total of one hundred and two inspections were conducted in the field.

In the last two weeks, code enforcement has opened twelve new cases, seven of which were complaint-driven, and conducted fifty-five inspections. Sixty-four illegal signs were removed from the public right-of-way. Six cases were also presented at the Special Magistrate hearing on November 20, 2025.

Senior Planner, Becky Schneider, is attending the Lake County Annual School Concurrency Meeting today along with Ward One Commissioner Treva Roberts. The event is being hosted at the Eustis Community Center at 601 Northshore Drive in Eustis.

I would like to express my continued gratitude to the staff of the Public Works Department as well as the Information Technology team. Members of both departments have helped immensely with the transition over the last two weeks to our new office space at 221 West Guava Street. Thank you for making the time to fit the many tasks that we have asked of you into your busy schedules.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

The third wellness presentation of the year was held on Wednesday, December 3rd. This month's topic, "Protecting Yourself from Fraud and Scam," was presented by Jo-El Gonzalez, VP and Financial Wellness Program Facilitator at Seacoast Bank. Employees received valuable information on identifying and avoiding various types of scams and fraudulent

activity. Forty employees attended the session. In recruitment updates, a conditional job offer has been accepted for the Customer Service Representative I position. Additionally, interviews for the Staff Accountant II role have been scheduled for Tuesday, December 9th, with a total of four applicants participating in the interview process.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

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

Joella, Andy, and John met with vendor ClearGov (budgeting software) to review project timelines and deliverables.

Jason, Howard, Andy, and John met with FDLE Deputy ISO Stephaine Williams on Monday to review the status of various compliance efforts.

Andy and John met with Kathleen and other Town staff to attend training for the CivicPlus Next Request public records request management software.

Elisha, Andy, and John are scheduled to meet with CivicPlus today for training on their Social Media archiving software.

John continued to collect evidence requests for the Town's annual financial audit.

Tanner, Andy, and John have begun the annual hardware lifecycle effort at Public Works. Anticipating completion by the end of the month.

LIBRARY (Kourtney Fehr)

Monday:

- Kourtney, Nicole, and I attended the **tree decorating event** at Town Hall, a tradition the Villages Elementary of Lady Lake has carried on for the past 20 years. They did an awesome job as always!
- Youth Services hosted **Alphabet Adventures** featuring the letter *l*, with **19 attendees**.

Tuesday:

- We hosted our **Festival of Trees Stroll** through the library, featuring live music and approximately **48 attendees**. The Friends of the Library generously sponsored refreshments, providing hot cocoa and cookies.
- Youth Services held **Tiny Tots** with **20 attendees**, and **Storybook Studio** with **13 attendees**.

Wednesday:

- Staff attended **Wellness Wednesday**, a monthly program hosted by HR for all town employees.
- We held **Storytime**, where children created keepsake ornaments using yarn measured to their height. Parents loved the idea, and we had **36 attendees**.

- We also hosted **Read with Scarlett**, with **13 participants** joining the program.

Thursday:

- I will be attending my monthly County library director's meeting virtually.
- Sierra is hosting a "**Make a Dog Treat**" program for the shelter pups. Lake County Animal Control will be attending and bringing three dogs to sample the treats. It should be a great time!
- Miranda has a teen craft today called Krafting Kandy at 3:30 pm

Friday:

- We have Little Sprouts at 10:30 am, video games at 3:30 pm, and a board game meetup at 3:30 pm.

You don't want to miss!

On Monday, December 8, at 5:30 pm, we will host An Evening with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Families can enjoy a magical night with a story, refreshments, and the chance to snap a photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Sierra creates many of our wonderful displays here at the library. Her latest one is the first thing you see when you enter the Adult Library—warm, welcoming, and absolutely perfect for the holiday season!

PARKS AND RECREATION (Mike Burske):

The Parks and Recreation team has been actively preparing for the upcoming **Lady Lake Christmas Parade**, scheduled for **this Saturday at 10 a.m.** Final preparations are underway to ensure a smooth and festive event for the community.

Christmas Parade Preparations

- Staff have been working diligently on staging, logistics, and support tasks for parade day.
- The team is closely monitoring the weather forecast, as rain is currently predicted for Saturday. Adjustments will be made as needed to ensure safety and event continuity.
- The Parks and Recreation Director have coordinated with the **Growth Management Department** regarding the placement and approval of signage for the parade staging area.
- Amy has been collaborating with Thomas to finalize the **Parks and Recreation float**, which is progressing well.
- Parade participation continues to grow, with **nine more entries than last year**, indicating increased community involvement and enthusiasm.

Community Feedback

- The Parks and Recreation Director continues to receive positive compliments from residents regarding the **Centennial Celebration fireworks show**. Community

feedback has been overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the event's quality and execution.

Facilities & Maintenance

- Van has been coordinating the repair of the water fountain at **Snooky Park**.
- Over the holiday, the Police Department notified Parks and Recreation of a water leak at Snooky Park. The team responded promptly and shut off the water supply to prevent further issues. Repairs are ongoing.

It is with a heavy heart that I have to say that the Parks and Recreation Department was not allowed to enter the Lady Lake Libraries Christmas Tree Competition. At first, we were disappointed with Ally Hermans' decision but realized that our tree is soooo awesome that it may deter others from entering. B.T.W. WELCOME BACK ALY!!!!



POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt): Community Fraud Prevention Talk

I was joined by Detective Brian Campbell and Detective Ronnie Williams for a speaking engagement at the Village's La Hacienda Recreation Center, where we discussed recent fraud schemes and how residents can protect themselves from scammers. The event was hosted by our Community Watch partners, and we were pleased to have colleagues from the Lake County Sheriff's Office join us as well. Brian and Ronnie did an excellent job, as always, and we truly enjoy every opportunity to interact with our residents. Unfortunately, despite our frequent outreach on the topic, scams continue to claim new victims.

Weekend Activity

The holiday weekend was fairly typical. Our squads made a few arrests, most of them alcohol-related, unsurprisingly. Officers also assisted several individuals in crisis, transporting them to appropriate facilities for help. In one notable case, officers responded to a burglary in progress and arrested four juveniles who had smashed an apartment patio door. They were released to their parents, and most of the stolen property was recovered. This was truly outstanding police work.

Seasonal Retail Patrols

In addition to our normal patrol units, you may notice an increased police presence in retail areas as we begin our annual effort to reduce theft and related crime during the holiday season. Officers will be patrolling on bikes, in marked units, and in plain clothes. As always, please remember to lock your vehicles, secure or hide packages, and stay aware of your surroundings.

PUBLIC WORKS/UTILITIES DEPARTMENT Administration (C.T. Eagle -Director and Kevin Anderson – Admin Assistant to Director):

Ted and CT met with the Town Manager and other department heads at Town Hall to coordinate moving the Finance Department, Human Resources, and Communications Department into their new spaces after Growth Management's departure. The tasks mainly include furniture moving, some painting, and deep cleaning the carpets. PW staff will be working on this in the coming weeks.

Ted and CT are meeting with FDOT staff and the mowing contractor next week to coordinate taking over the right-of-way maintenance of the US 27/441 corridor. Once we have a definitive takeover date, we will pass it along. The corridor remains under FDOT maintenance currently.

Maintenance Department (Ted Williams, Supervisor):

Performed driveway apron inspections.

Met with residents regarding stormwater issues and tree trimming concerns.

Set up Fire Sprinkler inspections and Termite inspections at the Utilities Operations Building.

Streets (Kon Scott, Travis Lacey, Todd Foster, and Justin Wallace - Lead Operators; Jordan Correa – Operator III; Jordan Pettinato – Operator II):

Performed litter pickup along roadways in Town. Continued cleaning or replacing street and stop signs townwide. Cleaned storm drains. Patched potholes and road cuts. Mowed Town maintained rights of ways.

Trimmed trees in Oak Meadows.

Filled in and regraded Oak Street.

Re-striped crosswalks on W Lady Lake Blvd, Clay Ave, W Hermosa St, Fennell Blvd, Veterans Way, Old Dixie Hwy, W Lakeview St, and Banana St.

Cleaned up the right of way on Old Dixie Hwy in preparation for the Christmas Parade.

Facilities Maintenance (Mark Walls - Lead Operator, Joshua Fitchpatrick - Operator II, and Phillip Perna - Operator I):

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Installed new bulletin boards and portraits at Growth Management. Replaced GFI receptacles at Town Hall. Adjusted the door, unit and the HVAC unit, and installed a new AED at the Library. Repaired broken irrigation sprinklers at the PD.

Assisted with the Villages Elementary Students decorating the Christmas Tree at Town Hall.

Put up Christmas Decorations at Town Hall, Growth Management, and the library.

Continued performing groundskeeping at Town Hall, PD, Growth Management, and the library.

Motor Pool (Billy Kohler - Lead Mechanic, and Jim Richards - Mechanic):

Ongoing repair and maintenance on Town Vehicles and Equipment.

Utilities — Water and Sewer (Thomas “Butch” Goodman – Supervisor, and Mary Levesque - Staff Assistant to Supervisor):

Continued entering new purchase order requests into the new Springbrook system,

Coordinated with multiple contractors, engineers, vendors, developers, and other departments regarding future and current in-process projects going on around Town.

Current project coordination with Hammock Oaks (Multiple Phases), Boulevard Oaks, Lake Ella Estates, and Green Key Village phases 5 and 6.

Distribution and Collection Systems Field Operations (Robert Barnes – Field Operations Manager; and Vacant - Lead Operator):

Continued performing utilities walk-throughs and final inspections for potential conveyance to the Town for phases of the Hammock Oaks Subdivision and Boulevard Oaks Subdivision.

Responded to customer concern calls.

Coordinate and complete various work orders, working on new accounts, meter reading, meter replacements, non-pay disconnects, and re-reads.

Completed 811 dig ticket location requests. Coordinating new fiber optic line locations.

Completed FDEP submittals, Water/Sewer/Reuse physical availability requests, Utility Quotes, CO inspection requests, and required back-flow device verification audits.

Performed weekly fueling and testing of emergency equipment, pumps, vehicles, and generators.

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants (Steve Pfouts – Treatment Plants Operations Manager; Darryl Flanders – Lead Wastewater Plant Operator; and Daniel Myklejord – Lead Water Plant Operator).

Butch and Darryl are visiting the City of Palm Coast to investigate the operations of a functioning MBR (Membrane Bio-Reactor) wastewater treatment plant today. Our Town Engineer and Town staff continue to investigate newer/alternative treatment technologies to make sure the Town gets the best bang for its buck for the construction of the next wastewater treatment plant. We will report on our findings next week.

Responded to after-hours call out for alarms at the Treatment Plants.

Wastewater Plants completed and submitted required compliance reports to FDEP. Continued running process control samples and making necessary plant adjustments.

Water, Wastewater, and Reuse Systems Master Planning Project and Water Facilities Plan Project, required for SRF funding, are in process by the Town Engineer, Jason Shepler with Mittauer-CPH. The results and recommended infrastructure projects will soon be presented to the Town Commission for consideration of approval.

The Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) renewal project with St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), is nearing the submittal phase to the regulatory agency for review. Projected completion of renewal is by the end of this year or early 2026.

We have multiple positions open here at Public Works; open positions can be found here: <https://www.ladylakefl.gov/210/Human-Resources>

Information regarding current Town Projects can be found here: <https://www.ladylakefl.gov/167/Town-Projects>