

# WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

## TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

January 22, 2026

### DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

**Shout Outs of the Week** go to the Lady Lake Police Department's drone program, operated by **Officer Robert Chausse**, which was requested and utilized Monday morning. The drone was instrumental in locating a resident with dementia who had left his home in the early morning hours.

The Lady Lake Police Department was notified at approximately **6:41 a.m.** Corporal **Eckherdt** made the request for the drone, which was approved by **Sergeant Maya**. The drone was deployed at **7:04 a.m.**, and the male subject was located just **three minutes later at 7:07 a.m.** He was found with minor injuries and was safely turned over to **EMS**.

**Great job to everyone involved on this outstanding and timely response.**

The **Department Manager's Meeting** was held Tuesday morning to review the upcoming **Mock Commission Meeting**, scheduled for **Thursday, January 29, beginning at 9:00 a.m.** The team also completed last-minute preparations for the **Commission Workshop on Funding the Future Without Property Taxes**, which was held **Wednesday, January 21, at 4:30 p.m.**

The **Commission Workshop on Funding the Future Without Property Taxes** highlighted the significant role property taxes play in municipal operations. This year, the Town of Lady Lake collected approximately **\$7 million in property taxes** to support the **\$27 million General Fund budget**. This means **only 25% of our General Fund is funded through property taxes**, which is the lowest percentage in our region—and possibly in the State of Florida.

The leadership team conducted research and could not identify **any state in the U.S.** where local governments operate without property taxes. If proposed legislation passes and is approved by voters in November, Florida will become the **only state to eliminate property taxes**.

At this time, the **State of Florida has not offered a replacement revenue source** should property taxes be eliminated. The absence of replacement funding could have devastating consequences for local governments across the state. Local governments are essential to building and sustaining thriving, prosperous communities.

The **General Fund** supports critical services, including **police, public works, human resources, growth management, communications, parks and recreation, the library, finance, IT, and the clerk's office**. Without property tax revenue, service levels in all these areas would be greatly diminished.

The leadership team at Lady Lake is **hoping for the best but preparing for the worst** by planning for the possibility of operating without property taxes. During the workshop, we presented ideas for **increasing alternative revenue streams**, with the goal of replacing the \$7 million currently generated through property taxes.

#### **CLERK'S OFFICE (Kathy Rosado):**

**Shout out to our Department Heads** for stepping up with some truly creative ideas for new revenue sources should property tax cuts come to fruition. There is no better way to challenge a group than asking them to think strategically about productive ways to generate funding for the Town. A special thank-you to **Bill Lawrence** for always pushing us to think outside the box, my brain officially hurts!

With that said, the Clerk's Office will be moving forward with bringing **Lien Search Request fees** to the Commission for consideration in February. **Orange Data** will serve as our vendor to collect these fees. There is no cost to the Town for this service, and it will generate revenue for the General Fund...a win-win.

**Exciting news: NextRequest** officially launched today! We are thrilled to begin using this web-based platform to manage public records requests. Residents can easily submit and track their requests, communicate directly with assigned staff if additional information is needed, and enjoy a much more transparent process. Behind the scenes, we're celebrating the end of spreadsheet tracking—every request is now securely maintained in a centralized database for easy retrieval. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this happen!

Our next project is **Lien Search Fees**, with a target start date of **March 1, 2026**.

#### **This week's activity:**

- 10 public records requests completed
- 3 lien searches completed

#### **COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):**

1/21/26

Submitted by: Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director

This week, Communications attended the Managers' Meeting, the Water Conservation Team meeting and the Town Commission revenue workshop.

We issued the following press release: [Lady Lake Police drone assists in recovery of man with dementia • Lady Lake, FL](#). Susyn did an amazing job editing three videos together (two drone, one dashcam) and syncing up the aerial shots with the dashcam shots. Take a look: [Police Drone Aids in Quick Recovery of Vulnerable Man - Jan. 20, 2026](#)

Today, we are coordinating a Zoom interview with FOX 35 on this story.

Special thanks and kudos to Officer Chausse for locating the missing man within minutes, and for helping Communications access the necessary video to tell the story.

Communications is working on our Mock Commission presentation, as well as supporting several departments to help make their PowerPoints more engaging for the students. We are happy to help in this endeavor!

We completed the [Q4 Growth Management newsletter](#).

Last Thursday, we attended the swearing-in ceremony of a new police officer, as well as the internal promotions of three. The Facebook post of these photos got 166 likes. Last week's post on the drug arrests received 365 likes! A large majority of comments were positive and supportive of the police department.

We also attended the Lake County Communicators meeting on Thursday, with a focus on 2026 goals and on how we can better structure our meetings to make them more valuable, collaborative, and beneficial. There is so much to be gained in getting together face to face to discuss current topics with our peers.

#### **FINANCE (Joella LeDonne):**

The Finance Department would like to welcome Elizabeth Ercilla as our new Utility Customer Service Rep I. Elizabeth started on Tuesday; in case you were wondering who that new smile is behind the glass. I know all the ladies in Utilities are very happy to have her, now being fully staffed.

On Wednesday, Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, I attended a workshop pertaining to alternative ways the Town can generate revenue if the removal of property taxes is passed. Since the finance department really is not a department that is "services" driven, like police, roads & streets, we are needed to help keep the Town financially stable and make sure that budgets are being followed and stay on top of spending. "Hope for the best. Prepare for the worst," is our Town Manager's motto. With his guidance and perseverance, the town will emerge stronger and be prepared to handle whatever the outcome will be.

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

The Growth Management Department processes a variety of application types, one of which is a variance. Under the Town's Land Development Regulations (LDRs), a variance is a request for relief from specific code requirements when strict enforcement would create an unnecessary hardship and prevent reasonable development of a property.

In simple terms, a variance is special permission the Town may grant to allow something that is not normally permitted under zoning rules. As part of the review process, staff evaluate a justification statement from the applicant explaining the hardship created by complying with the Land Development Regulations (LDRs). To qualify, the hardship cannot be self-created, and the request must not negatively impact neighboring properties. A common example of a

variance involves setback encroachments on uniquely shaped lots. For instance, a homeowner may wish to build a garage to securely store a golf cart, but because of the shape of their lot, the required minimum garage size would extend into a setback area. In this case, the homeowner may request a variance to allow the garage to be constructed.

Minor variance requests are reviewed and approved administratively, while more substantial variances are considered by the Planning and Zoning Board and subsequently by the Town Commission at public meetings. Last year, our department processed ten administrative variances. Three variances were heard during public meetings.

This week, the building department received sixty-three permits or plan revisions, and twenty-five building permits were issued. A total of one hundred forty-seven inspections were completed.

This week, code enforcement opened seven new cases, which were all complaint-driven, closed eleven cases, and conducted twenty inspections. Code Enforcement also continued to prepare their cases for the January 22, 2026, Special Magistrate Hearing.

The Growth Management Fourth Quarter 2025 (Q4) Newsletter is now available on the Growth Management webpage, or via the following link:

<https://www.ladylakefl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1119/Growth-Management-Newsletter-Q4-2025-ADA>

Thank you to the Communications Department for organizing and formatting the content for the Q4 publication.

**HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):**

Human Resources will be participating in the Risk Management Academy presented by PRM. This program is designed to provide Pool Member Risk Management Professionals with an opportunity to review the fundamentals of risk management. It focuses on risk management in the public sector and is intended for both professionals who are new to their roles and seasoned risk management professionals. The program will cover Introduction to Risk Management for Public Entities, Risk Transfer and Special Events, and Claims Processing. Participants who attend all three classes will receive a certificate of completion.

Next week will be dedicated to interviews for the following departments: Parks and Recreation, Utilities, and the library.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):**

Staff continue to work on specific network infrastructure and physical security upgrades for Town facilities. The current effort includes assisting the Finance department with its office relocation. This will continue over the next three weeks.

Andy and John will be attending the Winter FLGISA meeting on Wednesday and Thursday next week.

Howard will be providing cybersecurity training for the public on Thursday next week. Information and a registration link are available on our website: <https://www.ladylakefl.gov>

## LIBRARY (Aly Herman)

### Tuesday:

- The **Department Managers** met to review the upcoming **Mock Commission Meeting** with Villages Charter Middle School scheduled for next week.
- I attended a **Teams meeting organized by C.T.** with representatives from **Parks & Recreation, Police, IT, and Public Works** to discuss conducting an **Impact Fee Study** and implementing fees where they are currently not in place.
- Due to the chilly morning, *Tiny Tots* had **11 attendees**.
- *Storybook Studio* welcomed **16 participants**, and volunteer **Marsha Brinson** led a painting class.

### Wednesday:

- Nancy attended her **monthly safety meeting**.
- *Storytime* had **30 attendees**, and *Reading with Scarlett* had **8 participants**.
- Ruth hosted her **Author's Round Table**, with **10 attendees**.
- I attended a **Commission Workshop** focused on exploring ways to increase revenue.

### Thursday:

- The **Youth Library** was closed for the day due to the delivery of the remaining furniture. After nearly a year in the making, we are happy to share that the **library renovation is now complete**. We will be hosting an **Open House next month**—date to be announced.
- Nancy hosted *Let's Talk Books* at **2:00 p.m.**, a great opportunity for patrons to discover titles they may not normally read.

### Friday:

- *Baby Sprouts* will take place at **10:30 a.m.**, followed by *Bricks & Beyond* at **3:30 p.m.**
- We are also hosting an **all-ages movie at 3:00 p.m.:** *Fantastic Four: First Steps*. Popcorn will be provided.

### Major Achievement:

- **Sierra** completed a **20-hour Frontline Safety Training course** hosted by *Library Journal*. The training was funded by **Lake County Library. Way to go Sierra!**

### Shout-Out:

- A big thank-you to **Officer Redmond**! Last week's *Mario Kart with Officer Redmond* program drew **40 VELL students and their parents**. It was a fun-filled event—full of friendly competition—and the kids definitely proved their Mario Kart skills!

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

This weekly report provides an overview of current operations, ongoing projects, and recent events within the Lady Lake Parks and Recreation Department. The update highlights staff accomplishments, coordination with Public Works and contractors, facility management activities, and continued community engagement through events and partnerships. Our focus remains on maintaining high-quality parks and facilities while responding to community needs and enhancing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

### **Operations & Maintenance**

Staff members Scott, Van, and Thomas successfully removed the 34-foot Christmas tree at Snooky Park. Sam continues working on the removal of Christmas lights at the Log Cabin. Brad has recovered the field groomer from the baseball storage room and is currently coordinating with Public Works to have the machine serviced and returned to operation.

### **Projects & Capital Improvements**

Ted Williams from Public Works is working closely with the Water Department and the contractor to move forward with the 466-landscaping project. While the plans will deviate moderately due to the county requesting trees be placed in different locations, the overall design and spirit of the project will remain intact, with no noticeable difference to the final appearance.

The Parks and Recreation Director is working with the contractor to add several items to the revamping of the pickleball courts at the Guava Street Athletic Complex. As previously discussed, the department is pursuing the elimination of the underutilized tennis court and the addition of six pickleball courts. Pickleball courts continue to be widely popular, while tennis court usage remains minimal.

### **Facilities**

There were two after-hours calls last weekend regarding the Community Building. Both issues were successfully resolved by phone, and no site visit was required.

### **Events & Community Engagement**

Despite cold weather, the Farmers and Craft Market last Tuesday was successful, hosting approximately 28 vendors and welcoming 468 patrons through the gates.

The department extends sincere thanks to the **Lady Lake Kiwanis for their generous \$2,000** donation to once again fund the purchase of Easter eggs for the Lady Lake Easter Egg Hunt. Their continued dedication and support for this event is greatly appreciated.

Amy has been meeting with local businesses and has secured several participants for the Adult Easter Egg Hunt. Each business contributes \$250 to help offset the cost of prizes for the event.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):**

The Florida Police Chiefs Association held its Mid-Winter Conference in Orlando from Sunday through Tuesday. Lt. Tempesta, Lt. Dunagan, Lt. Greene, and I attended the conference, which was packed with pertinent topics, outstanding training breakouts, and meaningful networking opportunities.

Last Friday, I attended the Heartland League of Cities meeting here in Lady Lake, where Mayor Freeman was sworn in as this year's chapter President.

This week, we conducted an Oath of Office and Promotion Ceremony to welcome Officer Michael Godigkeit to our department and to formally recognize the promotions of Sgt. Maya and Cpls. Hayes and Cintron. I am proud to report that all vacant officer positions and supervisory roles are now filled. We are currently at full complement with thirty-two officers.

I firmly believe that when you surround yourself with great people, great things will happen. We have built an amazing family, and the future is looking very bright at LLPD.

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

CT attended and participated in the Workshop with the Town Commission regarding the potential loss of Ad Valorem Taxes.

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>

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

Ted and CT met with staff at Jacobs that handle the utilities for the Villages Center Development District (VCDD). The discussions were focused on coordination of utility road cut repairs made by Jacobs on Town maintained roadways.

Ted attended the Town Staff Safety Meeting at Town Hall.

Performed driveway apron inspections.

Met with citizens regarding maintenance concerns.

**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.

Removed fallen tree on Old Dixie Hwy.

Replaced a section of sidewalk at the Cove Apartments after utility cut due to leaking service line.

Finished replacing damaged curbing on Avenida Sonoma.

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

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Repaired sprinklers at Town Hall and PD.

Removed remaining furniture in the old Growth Management Department at Town Hall.

Assembled and installed new mailbox at the new Growth Management Building.

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.

Finished stripping and preparing surplus PD vehicles for transfer to the Communications and IT Departments.

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

Butch and CT along with the Town Engineer, Jason, are meeting with staff from St. John’s River Water Management District Thursday at Public Works, to coordinate submittal of the Town’s new Consumptive Use Permit renewal.

Coordinated repair of large generator at the Utilities Operations Building.

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):**

Staff repaired three water line breaks this week and issued boil water notices. Two repairs were made on Winners Circle, and one was repaired at the Cove Apartments. All three repairs were made under concrete slabs.