

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

January 2, 2025

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORTS (Bill Lawrence):

Weekly Report: Departments' Year-End Accomplishments for 2024

As we wrap up 2024, this report highlights the departments' key accomplishments over the past year. Every January, we set new goals, and we work diligently throughout the year to achieve them. The goals I set for us at the start of the year were to become better team players and improve our communication. This is still an ongoing process as we strive to enhance these areas. The proof of our improvement will be evident in the accomplishments reported by the department managers.

Strategic Plan Development

This year marked a significant milestone in our strategic planning process.

- We adopted a collaborative approach with the mayor to develop our Core Values of Authenticity, Wisdom, and Stewardship, which now guide our actions and decisions.
- Our team worked diligently to craft our Mission Statement:
"Shaping a vibrant and thriving community we call home."
- We followed this with the development of a Vision Statement:
"To foster a community of communities where everyone has access to employment, housing, and recreational opportunities while enjoying a high quality of life."

With these foundational elements in place, we shifted our focus toward developing a Two-Year Plan for each department, setting achievable goals based on our shared vision. These goals were carefully crafted by the team, taking into account the needs of the community and the resources available.

The next step is presenting this plan for approval at the January 6th Commission Meeting. Once approved, the final plan will be posted on the Town's website, ensuring transparency and continued community engagement.

We look forward to building upon this plan in 2025 and working together toward a thriving future.

Library Expansion

In addressing the significant growing pains the Town of Lady Lake has been experiencing, particularly the lack of office space, we initially considered expanding the Town Hall. However, after exploring a more cost-effective solution, we discovered that the second floor of the library was largely unused and served primarily as storage.

After researching the costs and potential benefits, we developed a plan to renovate the second floor to create office space for the IT Department, while also expanding the Children's Library. The current Children's Library space would be repurposed for our Growth Management Department. This reorganization freed up valuable space at Town Hall for departments such as Finance, Communications, Water/Sewer Billing, and HR.

Additionally, we secured a \$1 million grant from the Lake County Library Systems to support the expansion of the Children's Library. Construction is currently underway, and this initiative is a great example of how creative solutions and collaboration can address space challenges while supporting the growth and needs of the community.

We are excited to see the continued development of this project and its positive impact on the Town's infrastructure and services.

Farmers Market

The Lady Lake Farmers Market has experienced a highly successful year, marking its first full year back in operation from October 1, 2023, to April 16, 2024. During this period, the market hosted 11,403 customers, with an average of 495 customers each week, supported by approximately 30 vendors each week.

We are now halfway through our second full year of operation, which began on October 1, 2024. So far, from October to December 17, 2024, we've hosted 5,034 customers, averaging 457 customers per week. The customer turnout seems slower this year, but we continue to see a strong commitment from our vendors, with an average of 40 vendors each week.

In addition to our regular market offerings, we have enhanced the experience by adding monthly events and entertainment in partnership with various community groups. These include collaborations with the Lake County Master Gardeners, LifeSouth blood donation drives, Classic Car Exhibits, live music performances, and music on other days.

Looking ahead to the Winter and Spring months, we're excited to offer even more attractions. Pet Nail Clips will be available once a month, LifeSouth blood bank donations will return, and the Sweetheart Market will be held in February. The Lake County Master Gardeners will also return in February and March, and we will have additional live music performances from local artists such as Bobby Blackmon, Mike and Kathy, and Luke.

A special thanks goes to Jackie Schilling for her tireless efforts in organizing and supporting the market. We look forward to continuing to serve our community and building on the success of this market!

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to fostering growth, collaboration, and community engagement in all our initiatives. Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication. Let's continue to work together towards making Lady Lake an even better place to live, work, and grow.

CLERK'S OFFICE (Nancy Wilson):

After painstakingly creating a manual for using Wordpress we got Civic Clerk. There are some things about it I like and still things I don't like but the good outweighs the bad and there is no question that it's integration with the website is 100% positive for the public. We created a document for users, but it needed multiple revisions due to the changes made throughout the summer. The online "training" material is very basic, so we are updating user documentation on an ongoing basis. In the beginning, we thought that department heads would be uploading all their own agenda material, but it turned out to be easier for us to do all the agenda preparation in the Clerk's office since we utilize Civic Clerk daily and it could be difficult for those who do not have regular items on the agenda to struggle through the process. Due to some hiccups at first, I have been the primary user of the new software. Though both Carol and Jackie know how to use it, the cross-training process to learn the nuances of the program will begin in January. We should be in a place where if the Clerk's office disappeared one day, somebody who is "green" could step right in.

The records program at the library has wrapped up for the year thanks in large part to John and Leon. All documents that are being digitized have been transported to MCCi and records destructions have occurred. The process is ongoing, and we need to continue to manage our documents using Laserfiche. This project was huge, so it is quite rewarding that the library renovation project is finally underway.

Depending on time, we will work on writing policies and/or procedures. CRI, the town's auditors, have questioned finance about the town's general lack of such documents so the Clerk's office will generate what we can to do our part.

Annually, the Municipal Research department at the Florida League of Cities (FLC) sends surveys to all Florida municipalities to gather statistics. These statistics are used to provide a database to provide information about how cities around the state deal with operations, budgets, policies and services. The survey categories are: Budget/Finance, Economic Development, Public Safety, Operations/Facilities, Staffing/HR and Utilities. Each department is sent the portion of the survey related to their area of expertise then the information is compiled and forwarded to FLC for dissemination.

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

Communications 2024 Accomplishments

The Communications Department is proud of its accomplishments for 2024, and even more proud to support the Town, its leadership, Commission and employees in amplifying the great work all have done throughout the year. We look forward to a successful 2025, sharing critical information, highlighting what makes our town special, and helping to build a strong community and identity.

- Launched new town website and moved from .org to .gov
- Launched Civic Ready emergency alerting system and used the text opt-in option for events for the first time
- Worked alongside the Clerk's office to train and launch the Clerk portal
- Hired Multimedia Specialist
- Worked alongside IT to get Chambers' audio/visual and studio equipment prepared for livestreaming
- Began livestreaming P&Z and Town Commission meetings online with closed captioning and pre-meeting digital signage
- Completed a year-long communications plan for PD, which culminated in a statewide Public Relations Golden Image Award and Creativity Award
- Issued messaging on preparedness, response and recovery during Hurricanes Helene and Milton
- Media highlights included features in FLC's Quality Cities Magazine and newsletter, WKMG's Getting Results and FOX 35 Care Force
- Implemented Critical Mention media tracking, which collects all media coverage, shows the audience and value of the publicity
- Developed relationships with local and regional media to position the town in a positive light
- Worked with the Library director and vendor on a successful library rebranding
- Worked with the Library director to promote the library's grant and expansion project
- Increased Facebook followers to over 2,000 and became a Superhost which means we hosted more than 3 events and received at least 3,000 responses within the last 3 years (we hosted 151 events).
- Launched several new social media campaigns that highlight employees, which will become annual campaigns
- Used AI to create custom music for social content

- Verified and claimed town assets on Google Business
- Hosted two community outreach events with the Town Manager
- Created a quarterly newsletter
- Created a PowerPoint template for Commission meetings
- Coordinated the First Amendment Auditor training for directors, public-facing staff and area communicators
- Assisted in developing the mission, vision, values and strategic plan, and designed the final document
- Worked closely with several departments to help them meet their goals and enhance visibility of their projects
- Worked on water conservation messaging and merchandise design
- Implemented professional development for both Communications staff members
- Attended a 4-hour cybersecurity training, resulting in a certificate of completion
- Assisted Parks with community outreach regarding Pyramid Park selection
- Attended, promoted and created content for nearly all town events

Year End Stats

Press Releases

- 37 releases
- 85 news flashes (website)

Facebook

- 2,212 followers
- 709 posts
- 206,345 reach (+123.8%)
- 21.7 K content interactions (+63.6%)
- Video watch time: 6 days, 22 hours
- 3 second views 32,470 (+340.6%)
- 1-minute views 1,055 (+167.1%)

Website

- 53,000 users (April 1-Dec. 30)

- Average engagement time: 1 minute, 9 seconds

YouTube

- 113 videos created (98 videos, 15 Shorts)
- 7,467 views (350% +)
- 98.5 hours Watch Time (168% +)
- 34 subscribers (325% +)

LinkedIn

- 288 followers
- 67 posts
- 12,991 Impressions
- 497 Reactions
- 23 Comments
- 23 Reposts

FINANCE DEPARTMENT (Pam Winegardner):

The past calendar year 2024 has been a step forward for the Finance Department. We set goals that would improve processes and compliance with transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the move forward in selecting new software for finance.

After a second try in selecting new software, we signed a contract with Springbrook to upgrade from an old software that the town has been on since 2003. We will continue to move forward in developing this software into the new year.

We were successful in being awarded the 2021-22 and the 2022-23 Certification of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for the 28th and 29th years. This continues a long history of excellence by past finance teams and both Chet Ross, past auditor and the current auditors, CRI, LLC.

This past year, we have also tightened up the procedures for new vendors, procurements, customer billing and other finance procedures. New vendors are required to fill out an application, provide a W-9 but most important, pass the System Award Management (S.A.M) check. This ensures the town does not do business with a government banned entity that has outstanding infractions. Our procurement improvements require a signature from the town

manager/purchasing manager and the finance director on the blanket purchase order list, reoccurring order list, purchase orders and check requests.

Our customer billing department's work has increased dramatically with all the new projects in town. We now have three full-time employees (we had two in 2006 when I started) and have stepped up procedures by checking all meters that over several months have had a continuous meter read of zero consumption, creating new routes for the new housing projects including adding the new meters, updating contact numbers, and updating website forms with the help of our IT department. Our field and customer service employees in the water department numbered 9 employees in 2008 and only increased to 12 in 2024, 17 years later, with the meter accounts in 2008 at 2,001 meters to the current of 3,047 meters. Through these years, this service includes installing a lot of these meters, inspecting, repairs, reading them 12 times a year including service orders, turn on/turn off, responding to leak investigations, patrolling construction projects for water/sewer installation compliance, handling the plant operations, bringing the new plants on line and water main breaks which resulted in this water team absolutely doing more with less throughout these years.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (Thad Carroll):

The Growth Management Department of the Town of Lady Lake encompasses three divisions, the building department; the code enforcement division; and the planning and zoning division. There are many tasks associated with carrying out the duties in each of these areas, including creating policy to direct how the Town will grow, ensuring that development complies with those adopted policies and the Florida Building Code, and safeguarding community preservation through code enforcement activities. There is continual activity in each of these areas, which is what makes working in the Growth Management Department such an exciting and rewarding occupation. Year after year, we look back at what we have achieved, and we reflect on how our efforts have contributed to making the Town of Lady Lake the wonderful place that it is. Although I will not list specific projects, as they are far too numerous, I would like to share some statistics and a few accomplishments regarding our work in 2024.

The department adopted new land use fee schedule; the last update occurred in 2012. We also adopted a new building fee schedule; the prior schedule was implemented in 2018. The Commissioner Ward Boundaries were also amended to reapportion nearly equivalent populations among the five wards based upon the latest decennial census.

We processed three major modifications to commercial site plans and four minor modifications to site plans. We reviewed and approved three major site plans. Five additional site plan applications received in 2024 are still under review as we enter the new year.

We reviewed and approved eleven subdivision plats in some phase of development, being the preliminary plat, improvement plan, or final plat. Development activity in association with Hammock Oaks was responsible for ten of the eleven plats.

Growth Management staff presented and approved ten resolutions, including six variances. Fifteen ordinances (including annexations, comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, and policy amendments) were prepared and approved through Growth Management in 2024. Staff presented 41 agenda items to the Planning & Zoning Board for recommendations, and 75 agenda items were prepared for presentation to the Town Commission.

There were 6,178 building inspections conducted last year, and 515 construction related fire inspections were performed. In total, 2,328 building permits were issued.

Code Enforcement opened 757 cases, and 753 code enforcement cases were closed. The Special Magistrate presided over 62 code enforcement cases that were brought to hearing.

The Growth Management Department stayed busy as usual in 2024, and we anticipate this year to be no different. There is a lot of development already underway, and still, staff are being contacted continually by developers regarding potential projects that they would like to bring to the Town of Lady Lake. While there are some challenges that come about as a result of growth, there are also many opportunities created as well. The opportunity to start a new business, to redevelop a property, or to buy a new home to name just a few. Balancing these two is what makes our jobs difficult at times, yet very rewarding.

We look forward to 2025 and the challenges and opportunities that are ahead of us. The Growth Management Department takes pride in our work, and we truly appreciate the opportunity that we have to serve the great people of this community. Thank you, and to all a Happy New Year.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

No report this week.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

When we began this year, Bill commented that our project list was very ambitious. It was, and it continues to be. Some of these projects were more significant than others, and all those were a collaboration with Town staff and others.

We worked with the Town Clerks, Growth Management, Finance and Public Works staff to empty our document warehouse at the library in advance of the Library renovation project. We continue to digitize these files, adding them to our document management system.

We worked with Growth Management staff to complete and launch the public facing Planning and Zoning capabilities of our Community Development software.

We worked with Finance staff to complete the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software selection and contract negotiation processes and recently held the implementation project kickoff and scheduling meeting.

We worked with Growth Management and our peers in Lake County to resolve many complicated addressing issues and completed a Geographical Information System (GIS) gap analysis project that will help staff improve the quality of our existing infrastructure data going forward.

We worked with our Police staff to deploy new data connectivity devices in their vehicles, and with our peers at the Lake County Sheriff's Office to improve the resiliency of our network connectivity.

We completed the first year's construction of our Fiber Wide Area Network on schedule and under budget and have completed many other technical infrastructure improvements.

We have maintained acceptable response times for our employee help desk and have continued the development of a more mature information security program.

As we begin 2025, we will continue to build upon much of the work accomplished during 2024 and are encouraged that this work will produce improved outcomes for staff and our citizens.

LIBRARY SERVICES (Aly Herman):

As 2024 comes to a close, I'm reflecting on what an amazing year it was for the library and all the wonderful accomplishments we have achieved.

- 884 new patrons a 6% increase from 2023. Total of 16,749 registered patrons.
- Approximately a 10,000 increase in materials checked out in 2024 — 8% increase.
- Door count for 2024 — 169,448 about 8,000 people increase since 2023.
- Starting the construction of the library renovations.
- County Impact Fee Grant Reward — \$1,000,000.
- Approved book/material budget for another \$20,000.
- Program attendance 28,215, a 76% increase.
- Largest summer attendance.
- Added more adult programs (BINGO, knitting, board games, ESL and Chair Yoga)
- Participated in many outreach events either with the town or the local schools.

- Added adult and children learning tablets for checkouts.
- Biggest AARP tax-aide year.
- Started children scavenger hunts around the library.
- Another successful year of Festival of Trees.
- Library switched to CloudLibrary for digital books.
- Started puzzle swaps for the community.
- Increased social media.
- Published in Lake and Sumter Magazine for 40 under 40.

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my amazing staff for all they do. Without their dedication and hard work, we wouldn't be able to achieve so much or give back to our community as effectively as we do. I also want to thank our Town Manager, Bill, and the Commissioners for their unwavering support, which makes it all possible.

Library's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/lakelakelibrary225

PARKS & RECREATION (Mike Burske):

Events: Hired events coordinator and she implemented the events below.

1. Lady Lake Easter Egg Hunt
2. Daddy Daughter Dance
3. Mother Son Dace at Community Building with Dawn and Julia.
4. Not Too Scary Halloween Party
5. Lady Lake Christmas Parade
6. Light Up Lady Lake
7. Choir Night Under the Lights with First Baptist Church and New Song Church
8. Survivor Event A first for the Town
9. Arbor Day 2024
10. Weekly Farmers Market. A huge thanks to Jackie and Julia.
11. The second Fireworks Show and event for Lady Lake
12. Bounce House event for Lady Lake. A first event.

Construction Projects

1. Snooky Park Exercise Equipment

2. New Play Structure at Pyramid Park
3. Design and purchase process begun for soccer lights
4. Implementing getting the Guava Bathrooms and Community Building off septic.
Project lead by Public Works

League Support

1. Continued contact and maintenance for the Little League and soccer

Miscellaneous

1. Tree City U.S.A. Certification for the Town of Lady Lake
2. Team effort with Julia Harris, the Community Building made a nominal profit for the second time in my tenure at Lady Lake.
3. Hiring for the new events coordinator position and the new Operator II Position.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):

- Officer Gustavo Eloy was sworn in this week. He comes to us with eight (8) years of experience from the Barnstable MA police department. He also served in the US Marines. He will begin his field training next week.
- Officer Ronnie Williams also started with us this week. He will be sworn-in after orientation. He recently retired from the Ocala police department with twenty-five (25) years of experience.
- The department maintained a police presence in Spanish Springs for the Lighting of the Menorah ceremony. It is also nice to spend time with our friends for Temple Shalom. They also stopped by the next day with a few dozen "Rings of Power". Always lots of sweets at the PD around the Holidays!

We also aided with St. Timothy Catholic church due to their large Christmas services by helping with traffic egress.

There seems to be no shortage of all those important "things to do" at the end of the year. All have been busy performing their assigned duties in our attempt to bring the highest level of service to all in our community. We are proud to serve and "we will be there".

2024 Accomplishments:

- Dash Camera, Body Worn Camera, Cradlepoint connectivity and Taser project (installation, training, and implementation)
- Firearms Transition project (research, purchase, training, implementation)

- Drone Project (purchase)
- Patrol Lieutenant Watch Commander project (funded, selection on ongoing)
- School Resource Officer program reinstated
- Animal Control disbanded and turned over to LCSO
- Command Officer Development training for two sergeants
- Grant obtained for purchase of Load Bearing Vests
- Acquired bullet trap system purchased, installed, along with updated safety protocols
- Voice Stress Analyzer project (purchased)
- Updated software management program for FTO and Accreditation
- Updated current usefulness of current facilities to include office efficiency, sally port gate replacement, overhaul of plumbing for shower system and locker room cleanliness, purchase and installation of new external evidence shed
- K-9 program enhancements by attaining third party training and attainment of certifications
- Workplace Profile study (DISC assessment) for command staff
- Implemented improved Customer Service strategy
- Advanced Taser Instructor training and certification
- Dozens of Community Involvement Events
- Hired eight (8) officers and one (1) Executive Assistant
- Promoted one (1) corporal

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

Accomplishments for all Public Works Departments in 2024:

1. Finishing up Phase Two of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. Placed the new plant into service, refurbishing the old plant, and closing out the project. This project was 8 years in the making, from first discussions to project completion.
2. Finishing up Phase Two of the Well #4 and #5 Project, which included construction of two new wells, a new ground storage tank and high service pump. Project is nearing completion. This project was first discussed over 20 years ago, it was a long time coming.
3. Completed the Annual Street Resurfacing Project. The Town stills has an overall pavement condition rating above 80, still a "B" which is outstanding.

4. Coordinated consistently with the Project Managers and Contractor for the FDOT US 27/441 Road Widening Project. This project also included relocation of Town owned utilities. The close coordination resulted in a savings of \$500,000+ (final amount still TBD) of utilities relocation work by coordinating field corrections and workarounds. Project is in its closeout stage.
5. Continued street sign replacement project throughout the Town, this is a multi-year/ongoing project.
6. Fully staffed all divisions of the Public Works Department for the first time in many years.
7. Reviewed numerous submitted project plans, coordinated with engineers and developers throughout the process, and we continue to do so. Lots of projects are in the works, big and small.
8. Successfully prepared for and responded to Hurricane Milton. Staff worked 6 days a week, 12+ hours a day for almost a month to perform clean-up of debris throughout the Town. We were the first larger municipality in Lake County to complete the clean-up efforts. No outside contractors or consultants were used in the efforts, all in-house. Milton was the largest storm in the last 40 years that Town staff has cleaned up in-house. Hurricane Irma in 2017 was the largest previous cleanup. In comparison, Irma generated 8,500 Cubic Yards of debris and we hauled over 600 truckloads, Milton generated over 20,000 Cubic Yards of debris and we hauled over 2,000 truckloads. More than twice the amount of effort and debris.
9. Hurricane Milton also caused some flooding, we successfully responded to and assisted the Oak Gove Community that had flooding of the roadway and water encroaching the housing. These efforts were also in the middle of staff performing the hurricane debris cleanup efforts, it was a busy time for us. Removing the flooded water was no easy task due to the high water table at the time, a strategic pumping plan was developed and implemented that involved multiple pumps moving water to multiple locations. This didn't happen overnight; it took some time for water to recede in the other retention ponds, but the job got done. No loss of life or property was incurred due to these efforts.
10. Worked with other Town staff to develop the Town's Core Values, Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Plan. There was a lot of thought and effort put into developing these, and the process allowed staff to showcase their creativity.