

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

February 27, 2025

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

Shoutouts & Acknowledgments: Huge congratulations to our Finance Department for receiving the Certificate of Financial Excellence for FY 2022-2023! Special thanks to Pam Winegardner, Joella LeDonne, Debbie Lopez, Dawn Woods, and Michelle Sloane for their hard work and dedication. Well done!

A special shoutout to Officer Erica Hall for rescuing three puppies in need. The story has gone viral, and we are so proud of her quick action and kindness. Great job, Erica!

Department Manager's Meeting Recap:

This week's meeting focused on several important topics:

We reviewed the March 3rd commission agendas, with the first one starting at 5:30 p.m. with the presentation of the Audit Report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, by Carr, Riggs & Ingram.

We also discussed the upcoming cybersecurity training and our ongoing efforts to improve communication and conflict resolution.

One of the highlights of the meeting was an exercise on storytelling as an essential communication tool. Effective storytelling is a hallmark of great leadership, and it's an important skill for conveying messages with clarity and impact.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. Let's continue building on these successes and enhancing our communication as we move forward!

CLERK'S OFFICE (Nancy Wilson):

This has been a rather standard week of agenda prep, minutes transcription and customer service. We are working on two ordinances, one of which will update the responsibilities of the Parks & Recreation Board and the other that will update off-duty police officer rates. The commission approved an increased rate to \$60/hour in November, however, it was just discovered that this rate was set in an ordinance, not a policy, so a code change is necessary.

At this week's managers' meeting, Bill once again tackled communication skills. He asked that each of us tell the group something about ourselves that nobody knows. The stories were varied, emotional, and heartwarming. An exercise that I at first thought was tedious turned into a valuable exercise that was wonderfully humanizing.

The Farmer's Market was cancelled this week due to wet conditions. It is stressful making the call to cancel the market since weather conditions can change quickly and a bad call is deleterious, especially for vendors who count on making money at the market. Good call Jackie!

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

During the Department Managers' meeting this week, Bill challenged us to tell a story about ourselves that our co-workers did not know. I appreciated the vulnerability, humor, and life lessons that my peers shared and thought this was a valuable team-building exercise.

Communications released and began promoting the [Arbor Day Tree Raffle](#). We coordinated an interview with The Villages Daily Sun and Officer Erica Hall regarding LLPD rescuing puppies over the weekend. The adorable photos of the rescue received over 130 likes on Facebook, and was also picked up on WESH 2 News and in [Lake & Sumter Style Magazine](#). Kudos to Officer Hall and Sgt. Gehrsitz for saving these babies from the cold!

Also over the weekend, the Town experienced a water main break, causing a boil water alert for several addresses. I would like to give a shoutout to Butch and his crew for heading off what could have been a much worse situation. The Utilities Department is truly top notch. In the midst of it all, I also greatly appreciated that Butch contacted me on a Saturday with details and even sent a photo so I could share the information on Facebook, allowing The Villages News to issue the message to a wider audience. Here's the story: [Crash near Home Depot results in loss of water pressure at area businesses - Villages-News.com](#)

Additionally, Susyn assisted Code Enforcement with an audio/video file, created ADA files and made a multimedia promo for the town's new job vacancies for both Facebook and LinkedIn.

As a follow up to Communications attending "Lights, Camera, Connection: Media Interviews that Deliver a Message" with presenter Dan Ward, APR, CPRC, Owner/President, Curley & Pynn, I would like to share the following tips for giving a successful media interview:

Tips for Delivery

Do:

Be brief (sound bites)

Illustrate your points

Correct misinformation

Speak slowly

Dress appropriately

Take initiative

Choose the setting ... you're in charge!

Adjust tone & body language

Talk as though you're being recorded ... always

Remember bridge phrases

Repeat, repeat, repeat

Don't:

Memorize your answers

Repeat negative language

Speculate or speak for others

Look at the camera

Speak "off the record"

Abuse the opportunity

Leave your lane

Fill the vacuum

Rush

Use industry jargon

Forget "it ain't over 'til it's over"

FINANCE (Pam Winegardner):

The Town is discussing the ramifications of landlords/apartment complexes having leaks and not maintaining their plumbing. This results in tenants having to bear the cost of these leaks which are the responsibility of the landlord to maintain and cover the excess cost of the water bill. We have had many tenants incur high water bills and then cannot afford to pay and move to another rental, leaving the town to write off the water bill. Florida law does not allow us to hold it against the owner.

The Town of Lady Lake Land Development Code, section 14-10(a) 9 B states that the owner of the property shall be responsible for maintaining the water, reuse, and sewer pipes leading to and connecting from the plumbing system to the Town distribution lines and sewer mains. Failure to keep the lines clean and maintained in a proper manner can result in being cited into Magistrate court and incurring penalties.

The Town is reviewing all high bills to determine if the consumption is due to high usage or a leak. When we see repetitive issues that are not immediately taken care of, we will give notice to the owner that we will take them to court. The penalty can start at \$150 but the town has written in the Lady Lake Land Development Code (LDR) section 14-11 (a) l (6) that for any abnormal or unusual activities that adversely affect the Town and create a financial burden on the Town either directly or indirectly, the Town can seek financial reimbursement upon review and approval of the finance department and the Town Manager.

We insist on responsibility from our property owners and will always be willing to work with them to achieve a remedy. We, however, will be watchdogs for our taxpayers' money and take action as needed.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (Thad Carroll):

On Tuesday, revised site plans were submitted for the proposed warehouse to be located at 109 Griffin View Drive. This project includes a 26,585 square foot building and 37 parking spaces on 2.17 acres.

On Monday, a development order was issued allowing site grading work to commence at the site of the proposed Walmart Neighborhood Market.

The Public Works Water Treatment Plant expansion, located at 136 Skyline Drive, has been completed and received a Certificate of Completion.

Eighty-seven building permits or revisions were received this week, and seventy permits were issued. One hundred and twenty building inspections were conducted in the field. This week, Code Enforcement opened fifteen new cases, closed twenty-one cases, and conducted sixty-four inspections. Code Officers Crain and Williams also continued to prepare their cases for the Special Magistrate Hearing on February 27, 2025.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

The Human Resources department attended the Lake-Sumter SHRM February meeting. The presenter was Leslie Mizerak, CEO, Executive Coach, & Leadership Facilitator. She is based out of Orlando, Florida, and is a seasoned talent executive. Her presentation was on "Get Unstuck—Reconnect with Your Motivation." A dynamic and engaging program designed to help individuals

identify what's holding them back, rediscover their purpose, and build the momentum needed to achieve their goals.

Conditional offers of employment letters have been accepted for mechanic and water/wastewater trainee positions. Three more applicants were selected for interviews for the Network Administrator position. Only two applicants participated in the process.

The Public Risk Management of Florida hosted a webinar on back safety this past Wednesday. Public Works and Park & Recreation attended the webinar.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

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

The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Implementation Team (Finance, Andy, and John) will meet this afternoon to review workflow automation and security topics.

The IT Department currently has Systems Analyst and Network Administrator position openings. Please see the Town's website or contact Human Resources for more information.

LIBRARY

On Monday, I attended the monthly Friends of the Library meeting, which was both productive and exciting. The Friends have generously agreed to match the \$300 donation we received from The Orange Blossom Lion's Club, allowing us to host a Spring Break party on Thursday, March 13—stay tuned for more details next week!

Also on Monday, Mike, Amy, and Van stopped by to check out the renovations and discuss potential collaboration events for the coming year.

On Tuesday, I attended our Department Manager's meeting. Bill told us all to come up with a story to share. I love how we all got to share something some may not have known about us. It was a great way to learn, build trust, and connect with our fellow coworkers.

Nancy and LeeAnn met with our new McNaughton book vendor to see all they offer. We want to make sure we get our bang for our buck.

I also joined our biweekly renovation Zoom call.

Shoutout to our incredible library staff! While I was at the desk, a woman came in and shared that a gentleman had stopped her just to say how amazing our team is—always willing to help and go the extra mile. Great job Nancy, Nicole, Kourtney, Ruth, LeeAnn, Lisa, Sierra, and Sam. Your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed.

This Friday, we have baby Storytime at 10:30 am and video games at 3:30 pm.

Here are the youth program stats for this week:

-Tiny Tots: 25

-Family Crafting: 7

-Storytime: 38

-Scavenger Hunt: 11

-Reading with Scarlett: 15

www.facebook.com/lakelakelibrary225

PARKS AND RECREATION (Mike Burske):

The Parks and Recreation Department has been working with daily maintenance to include mowing and trash details. Vicky and Sam did a great job on the Community Building Landscaping Project. Thomas and Scott did the labor-intensive job of tying up the bottom of the fences at the basketball courts and Harry Sacks Field. The picnic shelter damaged by the hurricane was fixed last week by the contractor. This job was submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

The Opening Day for baseball is happening this weekend and the Mayor will be there to speak and most likely throw out the first pitch. The Babe Ruth League has done an awesome job this season and has just under 170 players signed up.

Amy has been working on the events, and we are gearing up for the Spring Concert Series, among other events. Amy visited the Taste of Leesburg last Friday. We will see a partnership with the Library during our Centennial Week for one of the events. The Adult Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt is coming along nicely. Our centennial stickers are in, and they look great. Banners have been ordered, and we will see them pop up on the poles in March.

I have been working with the fireworks company to get the fireworks for our July 4th event and the show for our centennial. We will have the use of the property as we did last year for the July event but may have to launch it from Rolling Acres. Marty with Benchmark was very receptive to working with us, so we will see what we can do. We have had two donations promised to the Town by area organizations. I will personally thank them when we get the funds.

I spoke with Ted from Public Works as he has been working with a landscape contractor who has given us what I believe is a great price for adding 30 palm trees, irrigation, and Zoysia grass out on CR 466. As soon as I get the plans, I will submit a right-of-way application to Lake County to begin the project. This project will be funded by the tree bank.

Weather dashed our hopes of having the Farmers Market this week as the field was too wet to have cars drive on the field. The consensus was that most of the vendors would not be thrilled carrying their items out on a wet field. It was a good call as the weather on Tuesday was quite dreary.

It is anticipated that the Scout Hut will be moved on Friday. After serving the community for many years it is off to another life. The crew is currently working to separate the two sides, and I spoke to them about being able to remove an area of the fence if needed. I do not have firm plans for the lot as of now but do have a couple of ideas. Ted Williams with Public Works did a great job in selling the building.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):

Graduation and Recognition: This Friday, Sergeant Gehrsitz and Sergeant Bilbrey will graduate from the Southern Police Institute's 98th Command Officer Development Course. Sgt. Gehrsitz will receive the Director's Award for academic excellence. This program strengthens their skills and will benefit both their careers and the department.

Theft Arrest: Our officers made an excellent arrest today after catching a thief who stole a large amount of merchandise in a suitcase. The suspect was caught nearby, and we're still looking for an accomplice. This was another organized shoplifting event.

Puppy Rescue: Over the weekend, officers found several abandoned puppies in a wooded area often used by transients. They were cold, hungry, and happy to be rescued. Our team, along with Fruitland Park PD, took the puppies in, and they are now safe and waiting for new homes.

Safety Reminder: It's been a busy week at LLPD. Please remember to lock your cars, don't leave valuables inside, and turn on your outside lights. Be kind to each other, leave other people's things alone, and call us if you need us. LLPD will be there!

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/>

Maintenance Department (Ted Williams, Supervisor):

All staff attended a Back Safety Meeting held at the Town Hall by HR and PRM.

Continued monitoring retention pond water levels and storm drains throughout the Town after rain events.

Continued coordination with Mike Burske on the installation of new landscaping along the CR 466 corridor.

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

Performed litter pickup along roadways in Town. Replaced street and stop signs. Cleaned storm drains. Mowed Town maintained rights of ways.

Continued cleanup of storage area behind PW and continued hauling of old concrete piles to be recycled.

Trimmed trees on Vista Place, Rio Grande Ave, and Del-Toro.

Remove snipe signs in the right of ways for Code Enforcement.

Facilities Maintenance (Truman Henson - Lead Operator, Mark Walls - Operator II, and Phillip Perna – Operator I):

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Repaired drywall, adjusted doors, and painted an office in the PD. Repaired HVAC unit at the Library.

Weeded and sprayed planting beds at Town Hall and the Library. Continued performing groundskeeping at Town Hall, PD, and the Library.

Motor Pool (Billy Kohler - Lead Mechanic):

Ongoing repair and maintenance on Town Vehicles and Equipment.

Began stripping the PD vehicle prior to surplus.

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

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

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

Completed 811 dig ticket location requests.

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

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

Phase Two of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications Project is weeks away from the final closeout. Both plants are in service and are doing well. Only punch list items and final inspections remain.

Phase Two of the Well #4 and Well #5 Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project is also weeks away from final closeout. Well #4 and the new ground storage tank are in the beginning stages of being placed into service. Well #4 was field tested over the weekend during a water main break caused by a vehicle collision. UT staff activated the well to ensure the system water pressure stayed in regulatory compliance. It performed great and will now be a vital part of the water distribution system. The FDEP clearance package has been submitted for well #5; we are awaiting sampling results and final clearance from FDEP for activation.