

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

July 31, 2025

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

Shoutouts & Acknowledgments:

A big thank you to Joella LeDonne, Finance Director, for doing an outstanding job preparing and presenting her first Budget Workshop! Joella collaborated effectively with department managers throughout the budget preparation process. Budget season kicks off in full swing every April, and this year presented extra challenges with the integration of the new Springbrook financial system. Despite that, Joella handled it all with professionalism and poise. Great job, Joella!

Department Manager's Meeting Recap – Tuesday Morning:

We reviewed the agenda for the upcoming Commission Meeting scheduled for August 4 at 6:00 p.m.

We reflected on last week's **Budget Workshop**, discussing what went well and identifying areas for improvement.

A key topic of discussion was the importance of **teamwork**—what it means to operate as a team and the obstacles that can prevent us from doing so.

We also began our annual **Performance Evaluation** (PE) process. This is a valuable opportunity to assess how we're doing, recognize achievements, and identify areas for growth. PE feedback is essential for professional development and continued success.

CLERK'S OFFICE (Carol Osborne):

The agenda for the August 4th Town Commission meeting was finalized and the packets completed and distributed.

I, too, commend our Finance Director, Joella, for a very thorough presentation at the Budget Workshop. Additionally, each director confidently presented their budgets and was prepared to defend and negotiate them. The commission knew their responsibility as stewards of the budget and were receptive and understanding to work out a manageable budget for each department. Just like parents with their children's Christmas list.

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

For this week's report, I would like to share the statement I prepared for the Commission's Budget Workshop, which highlights some of the work Communications has done over the last year, justifies minor additions, and notes decreases in spending.

"Good afternoon Mayor and Commissioners,

First, thank you for supporting the work of the Communications Department.

Communications prides itself on stewardship – one of our core values – and we have kept our budget as close to status quo as possible with the exception of some technical additions, office moving expenses and a small line item for a future Citizens' Academy.

I was able to reduce several items from last year, including photography, video production, and AV operations, – which we do a lot of in house – as well as commercial printing. Additionally, I have reduced our advertising budget, as we've shown the best way to gain visibility is through earned media through sound public relations practices rather than with paid advertising.

Now, I would like to share some of our analytics with you.

In January, we worked with the FBI to arrange a press conference regarding our police department's FBI Most Wanted arrest. The story garnered national and international coverage, earning the Town of Lady Lake millions of dollars in positive publicity.

Our Facebook page is nearing 3,000 followers, and our views since January are over 433,000.

Our YouTube channels has 147 subscribers and 204 videos that help to educate and entertain the public. The total watch time for these videos is nearly 14,000 minutes and the total views are nearly 52,000 for October 1, 2024 through July 23, 2025.

This week, we completed our annual website review and are happy to report over 259,000 page views with almost 28,000 documents downloaded. This speaks to the success of the new and more engaging website.

We have also sent 752 emails through the website and 113 text alerts.

Between October 1, 2024 and July 21, 2025, our 39 livestreamed meetings had 944 views, with a total of 17 hours 52 minutes 15 seconds streamed. For this reason, we also increased our budget slightly for closed captioning."

FINANCE (Joella LeDonne):

No report this week.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT (Thad Carroll):

A revised site plan was submitted for the updated expansion of Lady Lake Crossings. This project is situated on a 35.5-acre parcel at the intersection of County Road 25 and North Highway 27/441. The expansion includes additions to the existing inline retail stores and five outparcels.

Updated plans were also submitted for the final plat of Reserves at Hammock Oaks Phase 2A, which encompasses 72 residential lots across 16.862 acres.

This week, the Building Department received an application and plans for converting the Winn-Dixie at 944 Bichara Boulevard into an Aldi. Additionally, an application was submitted for both interior and exterior renovations of the La Reina building located at 1000 Main Street in Spanish Springs. Revised plans were also submitted for the new clubhouse in the Cresswind community, part of the Hammock Oaks development. A revision was likewise submitted for the new maintenance building at the Mira Mesa Golf Maintenance Facility at 860 Duck Lake Road.

During the week, the department received 64 building permit applications or revisions and issued 53 permits. A total of 201 inspections were conducted in the field.

In Code Enforcement activity, 19 new cases were opened, 12 cases were closed, and 44 inspections were conducted. Senior Code Officer Crain attended the Water Conservation Coordinators Meeting hosted by the St. Johns River Water Management District on Wednesday in Kissimmee. Representatives from various jurisdictions shared updates on their water conservation initiatives and exchanged ideas for improving outreach and implementation strategies.

Water Conservation Highlights

Quick Facts:

The average U.S. household uses over 100,000 gallons of water per year.

Americans drink more than 1 billion glasses of tap water daily.

Outdoor water use accounts for up to 75% of a household's monthly water usage.

Simple Tips to Conserve Water and Save Money:

Use an auto shut-off nozzle on your hose to save 3-5 gallons per minute.

Sweep patios, porches, and driveways instead of using water to clean them.

Set your lawn mower blade to 2-3 inches to reduce weeds and retain soil moisture.

Apply mulch around plants and flower beds to help retain moisture, reduce erosion, and regulate soil temperature.

Wash pets outside in areas that need watering.

Perform routine maintenance on irrigation systems to ensure efficient operation.

Remember: Every Drop Counts!

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

No report this week.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

No report this week.

We are continuing to focus on ERP implementation and FDLE CJIS audit prep.

LIBRARY (Aly Herman):

Last Thursday's budget workshop went really well! Joella did an outstanding job presenting the budget to the commissioners — great work! Kudos as well to all my fellow department heads for your thoughtful presentations. You clearly communicated the needs of your departments to help ensure they continue to run successfully for the Town. Great job, everyone!

A big shout-out to Sierra Cook for her outstanding customer service and her unwavering willingness to go above and beyond for both patrons and staff. On Wednesday, a patron shared with me that she had recently fallen on hard times and needed assistance on the computer. She was incredibly grateful for Sierra's kindness, patience, and the time she took to help. The patron said, "Sierra is an 11 out of 10, and you're lucky to have her here." I couldn't agree more! Sierra will be celebrating one year with us on August 12, and we've truly enjoyed having her as part of the library family. Thank you, Sierra, for all you do!.

Even though our summer programs have wrapped up for the year, the Youth Library is still bustling with activity! We continue to see a steady flow of both regular and new families visiting us daily — it's wonderful to see the space so vibrant and active!

Here are the youth program stats for this week:

-Lego Master: 17

-Craft Corner: 35

-Tiny Tots: 22

-Family Crafting: 15

-Storytime : 44

-Reading with Scarlett: 8

- Grab and Go Craft: 40

www.facebook.com/lakelakelibrary225

PARKS AND RECREATION (Mike Burske):

The Parks and Recreation Department has been performing routine maintenance this week with the maintenance crew mowing and performing daily duties. Crews have been focusing on washouts at the playground while others have been mowing and keeping up with appearances. Amy is focusing on the Fall events as they are right around the corner.

The lighting project at the Rolling Acres Sports Complex is coming along well. The lights were turned on late last week for the first time. This is a great project that has been so needed since the building of the complex. We opted to keep the old lights and use them for spare parts. Musco would have reconditioned and resold them, so it is in our best financial interest to hold onto them, so we do not have to buy extra parts when needed.

Amy and I have been pricing a 34-foot panel Christmas tree for Snooky Park. As we saw at Light Up Lady Lake last year, we were very crowded at the event and were right next to the street. We will be moving the event over to Snooky Park for safety reasons and we will still be lighting up the Log Cabin as we have been for decades. I have found a tree that is made in Georgia and was on sale for 25% off. This will keep our money in the United States and more likely to get it in time.

Ted and I have hit a challenge from Lake County concerning the landscaping project on 466. The county engineer is concerned about the zigzag pattern of the proposed trees. Keep in mind that the proposed pattern replicates the current tree pattern that was installed by Lake County. If we are delayed by Lake County, we will have money in next year's budget to complete this project. Ted has done an awesome job working with the landscapers on getting this project completed.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):

Officer Redmond recently completed two weeks of training alongside fellow Lake County School Resource Officers. As I've shared before, the level of regional cooperation among our law enforcement agencies is the strongest I've ever seen. This consistent and collaborative training ensures officers stay updated on best practices and fosters strong peer-to-peer connections. We always hope for the best—but we train and prepare for the worst.

Our department participated in the multi-agency initiative *Operation Southern Slow Down*, aimed at reducing unsafe driving behaviors. During the campaign, our officers issued 59 citations and 91 written warnings for speeding, aggressive driving, and seatbelt violations.

The driving habits we observe can be alarming—please, slow down, stay patient, and always wear your seatbelt.

We recently took part in the Town Commissioner's budget workshop. Striking the right balance between public safety and financial responsibility is never easy, but it's essential. We are committed to providing high-quality service while being excellent stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Officers Tisdell and Johnson have successfully completed their field training programs and are now assigned to their respective squads. We currently have one vacant officer position and anticipate beginning a new round of applicant testing in the coming weeks.

It is truly an honor to work alongside some of the most dedicated and professional individuals in law enforcement. I witness excellent police work every day, and it's our privilege to serve this outstanding community.

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

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

The annual road resurfacing project is set to start on Monday, August 11th and will continue until August 18th, weather permitting. A full street list and activity schedule will be available on the Town's website.

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.

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):

Attended the Pre-construction meeting with the Paving contractor and coordinated the proposed resurfacing activities and schedule.

Performed driveway apron inspections.

Met with residents regarding stormwater issues and tree trimming concerns.

Streets (Kon Scott, Travis Lacey, and Justin Wallace - Lead Operators; Todd Foster – 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.

Monitored retention ponds after rain events.

Trimmed trees on Chula Vista Ave.

Cleaned up the downed tree on Carriage Lane after the storm.

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

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Repaired water leaks at Town Hall. Repaired the door and installed a clock on the wall in the Commission Chambers at Town Hall. Repaired sinks at 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.

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

Conducted multiple interviews with HR for open positions.

Began preparing annual staff evaluations.

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, Lead Operator):

Completed customer concern calls.

Coordinate and complete various work orders, working on new accounts, meter reading, 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 (Daniel Myklejord – Lead Water Plant Operator, Darryl Flanders – Lead Wastewater Plant Operator, and Steve Pfouts – Treatment Plants Operations Manager)

Working on the Lead and Copper sampling plan for the water system.

Water, Wastewater, and Reuse Systems Master Planning Project and the newly approved 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 be presented to the Town Commission for consideration of approval this Fiscal Year.

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. The projected completion of the renewal is by the end of this year or early 2026.