MINUTES OF THE TOWN COMMISSION MEETING
TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

May 19, 2025

The regular meeting of the Lady Lake Town Commission was held in the Commission Chambers at Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida, with Mayor Freeman presiding. The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

Pastor Pat Bromberek – Hope Lutheran Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Mayor Freeman

ROLL CALL

Commissioner (Ward)	Present
Regan (Four)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Sage (Five)	YES
Freeman (Three)	YES

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Police Chief Steve Hunt; Deputy Chief Jason Brough, Lady Lake Police Department; Lady Lake Police Officers and staff: Cpl. Lidia Maya; Lt. James Dunagan; Sgt. Heather Couch; Officer Jean Cintron Caraballo; Officer Steven Johnson; Officer Gustavo Eloy; Officer Amanda Hayes; Officer Joshua Higgins; Mary Mullen, Records Associate; Elaine Kuligowski, Administrative Assistant; Thomas “Butch” Goodman, Utilities Supervisor; Ted Williams, Streets and Maintenance Supervisor; Public Works staff: Robert Barnes; Kon Scott; Travis Lacey; Justin Wallace; Todd Foster; Billy Kohler; Jordan Correa; Jordan Pettinato; Steve Pfouts; Darryl Flanders; Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director; Tamika DeLee, Human Resources Director; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; Becky Higgins, Senior Planner; and Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk.

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

A. PRESENTATIONS

1. Corporal Lidia Maya will receive the Lady Lake Police Department's 2024 Officer of the Year award. (Chief Hunt)

Police Chief Hunt read a statement recognizing Cpl. Lidia Maya as the Lady Lake Police Department's Officer of the Year 2024.

Town of Lady Lake police department officers and staff were in attendance.

B. PROCLAMATIONS

2. Proclaiming May 23, 2025, as Poppy Day in Lady Lake (Mayor Freeman)

The proclamation was read aloud by Mayor Freeman and presented to VFW Auxiliary Unit 347 President Maureen Caswell. Deb Stanley presented paper poppies to the commission and members of the audience.

3. Proclaiming May 18-24, 2025, as National Public Works Week (Mayor Freeman)

The proclamation was read aloud by Mayor Freeman and presented to Ted Williams, Streets and Maintenance Supervisor. Town of Lady Lake Public Works staff were in attendance.

C. CONSENT

1. May 5, 2025 – Town Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes

2. May 5, 2023 – Town Commission Minutes

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Lawrence stated the FBI will present awards to Cpl. Andrew Eckerdt, Sgt. Michelle Bilbrey and Officer Jesse Pettis in the Commission Chambers on Tuesday, May 27 at 4:00 p.m.

Breakfast with the Mayor at the Cottage Inn is Wednesday, May 21.

Mr. Lawrence stated the town's engineer, Jason Shepler, presented an overview of the wastewater expansion project's anticipated capacity at the Commission Workshop meeting on May 15. Mr. Lawrence stated that he has been discussing the project with Growth Management Director Thad Carroll and Utilities Supervisor Butch Goodman. He stated that Mr. Shepler noted that the state will require property owners with a septic system to connect to town services. Also, the estimates with Fruitland Park's capacity needs to be verified. Mr. Lawrence asked the commission if they have any questions for Mr. Shepler.

Mayor Freeman stated that he wants a detailed explanation how no ad valorem taxes would be used to repay the loan.

Mr. Lawrence stated that the town would utilize a low interest loan through the State Revolving Fund (SRF) that is repaid through user fees. He stated that he will research other options for funding. A partnership with Fruitland Park is one option but is it the best course for Lady Lake. He noted that Fruitland Park currently pays the town $20k monthly and that fee will increase dramatically with this improvement project. Mr. Lawrence stated that he is compiling more information for the commissioners to determine the best option for Lady Lake.

Mayor Freeman summarized that the rates would increase if the payment of the loan is mitigated by user fees and not through ad valorum taxes. This will need to be explained to the constituents.

Commissioner Roberts verified with Mr. Lawrence that The Villages currently processes water and wastewater for their residents, even though reclaimed water is moved back and forth between The Villages and the town. She stated the actual number of households that are included in the overall population served by the new plant are outside of The Villages, and accurate figures need to be presented to determine an adequate rate increase. Commissioner Roberts concurred that alternative funding options need to be considered such as another package plant rather than undertaking 30 years of debt. She noted that the town's future growth it is estimated upon large undeveloped tracks and asked where this area is located. She asked as to the Town's liability of these approved, undeveloped projects.

Growth Management Director Carroll stated that the undeveloped parcels Mr. Shepler referenced in his presentation are primarily commercial parcels and are located on the south end of the town. Mr. Carroll stated that another issue the commission needs to consider is the Live Local Act that the state can enforce. This means a development could be approved at 12 dwelling units per acre, yet if the Live Local Act is imposed, the development would have to construct 18 dwelling units per acre. He stated that Mr. Shepler also indicated near-term development identified on a few tracks on Edwards Road, along with dormant properties that were rezoned approximately 15-20 years ago. Mr. Carroll stated that there is no current indication when these properties will be developed.

Commissioner Regan asked whether there is a signed contract with Fruitland Park to extend services and when it would expire.

Mr. Lawrence stated that it is a ten-year contract with two years remaining. In 2024, Fruitland Park requested an extension for another ten years and the commission agreed to a two-year extension. He stated that it takes approximately five years to construct a wastewater treatment plant from design to implementation. He stated that the commission needs to consider if they

want to move forward with Fruitland Park as part of this project as that affects the town's capacity. He advised that Fruitland Park's flow has increased in the past eight years, and they continue to pay the same rate.

Mr. Lawrence stated that when a project's application is submitted, the Public Works director verifies that the town has the capacity to service the development. However, the commission needs to be aware of all factors to make an informed decision. Without a new wastewater treatment plant, there can be no more annexations. He stated that Fruitland Park needs to know what direction the town is taking and acknowledged that it is too soon to decide with the current information.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that this commission has been in place for a few years and asked if the current developments' properties were annexed before the plant was put in process to be built. This commission needs to decide if it desires future growth and what are Fruitland Park's intentions as these matters determine the size of a new wastewater treatment plant. He stated that he prefers having the option to annex property for a project, especially if it benefits the town.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that as these approved projects build out as projected, the brand new plant does not have capacity. The town should have been able to construct a plant that would service the town for many years, and yet we are at a point currently where we cannot consider future annexations.

Mr. Lawrence stated that this is a complicated issue due to many factors. The town is obligated to service the approved projects, and the phases in Hammock Oaks are building out faster than anticipated.

Commissioner Gourlie reiterated that the commission needs to decide if the town should grow. He stated that the commission has had workshops regarding the construction of a new police department, a recreation center, a wastewater plant and if the town continues to grow, perhaps a new well in the future. The commission needs to consider what is in the best interest for the Town of Lady Lake.

Mr. Lawrence concurred with Commissioner Gourlie. His preference is that infrastructure takes priority, and the town is currently in a state of growing pains. The houses in the new developments have not been sold, yet the town needs to move forward.

Commissioner Sage stated that more revenue is not necessarily a good thing. A new police department and recreation center have been proposed, and now a multi-million dollar sewer plant. He stated even though more houses brings more revenue it also brings more expenses. He stated that revenue was considered in the past, and the reality is the revenue is not worth the expenses that are incurring.

Commissioner Sage stated it was his understanding that the contract with Fruitland Park to treat their wastewater was to give them time to build a wastewater plant. At the workshop on May 15, the mayor of Fruitland Park stated that was not the agreement. He stated at the time Fruitland Park was partnering with the town, they should have been required to pay a percentage of the new plant to process their wastewater instead of $20k a month. He wants to know the current percentage of Fruitland Park's usage and the projected usage in five years. He questioned if the town would be at capacity in 2029 without Fruitland Park's contract.

Mr. Lawrence clarified that the town is not in partnership with Fruitland Park. He reiterated that the contract is to treat Fruitland Park's effluent for ten years at $20k month. This contract expires in 2026. In 2024, Fruitland Park requested to renew the contract for another ten years. He stated that this commission decided to extend the contract for two years to expire in 2028.

Mr. Lawrence stated that a partnership requires Fruitland Park to buy into the plant. Fruitland Park requires one million gallons, or one-third of our plant's capacity, given their anticipated growth.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that former commissioners entered into this agreement, and none of those members are currently on the board.

Mr. Lawrence stated that he believes at that time it was the understanding that Fruitland Park would build their own plant. What matters now is how to move forward.

Commissioner Gourlie emphasized that this commission needs to do what is best for Lady Lake because they do not represent Fruitland Park.

Commissioner Regan stated that he does not want the proposed police department and recreation center to be overlooked. He agrees that the commission needs to take care of Lady Lake.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

No report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Williamson, 711 Tangerine Dr.

Mr. Williamson expressed his concerned regarding the projects near Griffin Avenue and CR 25, and asked if there are plans for infrastructure improvements.

Mayor Freeman stated that there is not much that can be done to widen the road. He stated that he has discussed upgrading the intersection of Griffin Avenue and CR 25 with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Mr. Carroll stated CR 25 is a policy constrained corridor, meaning there are no plans to widen this road. He advised that the Boulevard Oaks development is required to construct deceleration lanes and turn lanes. As each development begins, the plans will be presented to the county officials.

Mr. Williamson stated that The Villages exits at Griffin Avenue, which is a dangerous area already and the traffic will increase with the new developments. Also, he stated that the trees have been removed at the storage facility and the nearby residents are exposed. He asked if the developer would install a fence.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that a fence was to be installed as the project developed.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

s/ Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk

s/ Ed Freeman, Mayor