

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

September 15, 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.

Mayor Freeman stated a comment card must be filled out in order to speak on a topic. A card may be filled out at any time during the meeting.

Mayor Freeman stated that when he adjourns the meeting no one will be permitted to speak.

Mayor Freeman verified with Deputy Town Clerk Osborne that this meeting was properly noticed.

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

Jim Knight – Retired Pastor

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; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; Becky Higgins, Senior Planner; Lady Lake Police Chief Steve Hunt; Lieutenant Robert Tempesta, Lady Lake Police Department; Lieutenant Allen Greene, Lady Lake Police Department; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; Joella LeDonne, Finance Director; Brandi Carson, Assistant Finance Director; Tamika DeLee, Human Resources Director; Aly Herman, Library Director; Kathy Rosado, Town Clerk; and Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk.

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

A. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Resolution 2025-109 – First and Final Reading – Adoption of the Final Millage Rate for FY 2025-2026. (Joella LeDonne)

Finance Director Joella LeDonne presented Residential 2025-106, which sets the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 tentative property tax millage rate of 3.6510 mills per \$1,000 taxable valuation, which is 6.53% greater than the current years rolled back rate of 3.4273.

Staff recommends approval of Res. 2025-109.

Per State Statute Chapter 200.065, the Town of Lady Lake must hold a public hearing on the tentative millage rate and proposed budget. At this hearing, the Town Commission will discuss the proposed millage rate, and if changed, re-compute its proposed millage rate and publicly announce the percent, if any, by which the re-computed tentative millage is greater than or less than the rolled-back rate and approve the resolution.

As a reminder, the Town Commission could have increased the millage rate at the September 3, 2025, meeting, but at the second public hearing on September 15th, the Town Commission will not be able to increase it from what was approved at the September 3rd meeting. This rate, plus any other rate below this rate, requires an affirmative vote of three members of the Town Commission.

The hearing was advertised via the TRIM notice mailed out by the Property Appraiser and in the Daily Sun newspaper on Friday, September 12.

Commissioner Sage asked Ms. LeDonne to explain how the rollback rate is calculated. He stated the commission did not increase the millage rate yet based on information in the newspaper regarding the rollback rate it appears that the commission could be raising taxes this year.

Ms. LeDonne stated the rollback rate allows the same revenue as the previous year.

Town Manager Bill Lawrence explained further that the current proposed mill rate is the same as last year. He stated that the town's revenues are down from last year.

Commissioner Roberts acknowledged that the roll back rate is confusing. She stated that the millage rate did not change, the valuation of properties increased which raised taxes. She stated that the town is receiving less money in ad valorem taxes than it takes to operate the police department.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gourlie and seconded by Commissioner Roberts, the Commission approved the first and final reading of Resolution 2025-109, which sets the FY

2025-2026 tentative millage rate of 3.6510 mills per \$1,000 taxable valuation which is greater than the current year's rolled back rate of 3.4273 mills, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

2. Ordinance 2025-11 – Second and Final Reading – Adoption of Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. (Joella LeDonne)

Finance Director Joella LeDonne stated that Ordinance 2025-11 finalizes the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 estimated revenues, expenditures, and expenses for the general fund, the special revenue fund, and utilities fund.

Per State Statute Chapter 200.065, the Town of Lady Lake must hold a public hearing on the tentative millage rate and proposed budget. At this hearing, the Town Commission will approve the second and final reading of the budget ordinance after adoption of the tentative millage rate.

The hearing was advertised via the TRIM notice mailed out by the Property Appraiser and in the Friday, September 12, 2025, Daily Sun newspaper.

The fiscal impact for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is \$37,116,027.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gourlie and seconded by Commissioner Regan, the Commission approved the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-11, by the following roll call vote:

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES
Roberts (One)	YES
Sage (Five)	YES

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0

B. CONSENT

1. September 3, 2025 – Town Commission Minutes

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

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. None

D. TOWN ATTORNEY’S REPORT

1. Ordinance 2025-12 – First Reading – De-annexation – Taylor Long et al – An ordinance voluntarily De-annexing Nine Properties Totaling Approximately 20.69 acres, owned by Taylor and Turner Long, Kristen and Wade Pettis, *** (Owner’s Information Exempt Under Florida Law), Kayla and Daniel Davis, David Chioo, David Carnecchia, Justine Carnecchia Life Estate, Debra Francis, and Scott Doree, located on the East and West Side of Carolina Avenue and North of Lake Griffin Road, within Lake County Florida. (Thad Carroll)**

Growth Management Director Thad Carroll stated on Thursday, July 31, 2025, an application was filed with the Town of Lady Lake by Taylor Long on behalf of the owners of nine properties requesting to de-annex said properties from the incorporated limits of the Town of Lady Lake. The zoning designation is single-family medium density. The present use of the property is residential.

Staff recommend approval of Ordinance 2025-12. Mr. Carroll stated that the town has approved de-annexations in the past.

Mr. Carroll stated that several property owners along Carolina Avenue contacted him at various times to discuss de-annexation stating that they are not receiving town utility services or road maintenance. He stated that the police have responded to a few calls in that area and there have been some code enforcement cases along Carolina Avenue. Mr. Carroll stated that the individual properties average two or more acres. He stated that per the Lake County tax rolls, the total value of these properties is less than \$5,000.00.

Mr. Carroll presented a location map of the subject properties, noting that they are adjacent to the Water Oak Community. He stated that the town has water and sewer service near Lake

Griffin Avenue. To service these properties, utility lines would need to be installed more than a quarter of a mile. The town does not have plans at this time to construct these service lines and there is no proposed development at this location that compels the need for these services. He advised that water and sewer utilities serve one-half acre lots or lots less than one-quarter acre.

Mr. Carroll instructed the applicant to contact Lake County, to find out how they would go about acquiring a comprehensive plan designation and a zoning designation. He stated that the first step is removing these properties from the town's boundary because that area is rural in character.

Notices to inform the surrounding 28 property owners within 150 feet of the properties were mailed on Monday, August 25, 2025. The property was also posted on Monday, August 25, 2025.

To date, staff has not received any correspondence in support or opposition of this application.

Commissioner Regan inquired if the property owners' desire is to keep the area rural.

Mr. Carroll replied affirmatively reiterating that these properties are two or more acres each. He stated that the town codes are more stringent than the county codes and the property owners feel that they are unable to utilize their property as they would like to.

Mr. Carroll stated that in 2001 the County's lot split regulations pertained to parcels for minor subdivisions or a family lot split. At that time, the property owner applied for annexation into the town. Mr. Carroll stated that according to the minutes of the commission meeting when the annexation ordinance was presented, the commission agreed to the annexation contingent upon the property owners constructing the water and sewer lines and the road development and maintenance. Mr. Carroll advised that these terms were not met. Carolina Avenue is a dirt road and there are no water or sewer lines.

Mayor Freeman verified with Mr. Carroll that the properties to the west of this area are also in Lake County.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gourlie and seconded by Commissioner Roberts, the Commission approved the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-12, by the following roll call vote:

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Regan (Four)	YES
Gourlie (Two)	YES

Commissioner (Ward)	Vote
Roberts (One)	YES
Sage (Five)	YES
Freeman (Three)	YES

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0

2. Resolution 2025-107 – First and Final Reading – A Resolution of the Town Commission of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida; Vacating a Portion of the Public Right-of-Way of County Road 25, also Referenced as Teague Trail, lying within the Northeast ¼ of Section 17, Township 18 South, Range 24 East, Lake County, Florida. (Thad Carroll)

Growth Management Director Thad Carroll stated that the application for the right-of-way vacation was submitted by Steven Longo on behalf of SRK Lady Lake 43 Associates. On January 22, 2025, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners transferred that portion of Teague Trail/ CR 25 lying southwest of Highway 27/441, to the west of the intersection at Water Oaks Boulevard. Should Resolution 2025-107 be approved, the northern half, roughly 928 feet, will be vacated and become real property of the adjacent property owners. The remaining portion of County Road 25/Teague Trail west of Highway 27/441 will continue in operation and be maintained by the Town of Lady Lake.

Staff recommends approval of Resolution 2025-107.

Mr. Carroll presented a map indicating the location of the subject right-of-way. He stated that this map was distributed to the adjacent property owners and was included in the advertisement of this resolution. He indicated on an aerial view of the area that the subject right-of-way stops at the end of commercial property. He advised that these properties would continue to have access because they have frontage to Teague Trail.

Mr. Carroll stated that once vacated, the property owner will maintain this right-of-way.

Mr. Carroll stated that the application was submitted in conjunction with a site plan application that is currently being considered for development of property formerly known as the Mayfield property. The applicant needs to vacate this portion of the right-of-way due to the proximity of one of the building footprints to the right-of-way and the inability to maintain the necessary setbacks.

Mr. Carroll presented a current sketch map of the subject property and a sketch map of the proposed project. He stated this area is adjacent to the Lady Lake Crossing Shopping Center, which is the site plan under consideration. The property owner currently owns the parcels to

the west of the right-of-way, subject to the vacation request. The right-of-way presently terminates in a cul-de-sac which is southwest of the newly widened Highway 27/441.

Mr. Carroll advised that Duke Energy is the only entity which has a need to utilize the roadway due to their substation located east of the portion of right-of-way proposed to be vacated. The applicant, SRK Lady Lake 43 Associates, LLC, has granted Duke Energy an Access Road Easement to ensure that there is access to their facilities after the right-of-way vacation occurs. There are five commercial parcels which currently use that portion of County Road 25/Teague Trail north of the intersection with Oak Street; however, that portion of right-of-way along their commercial frontage is not part of the right-of-way vacation application. Therefore, access to their properties will not be impeded. He stated that a traffic light is included as part of this development.

Five adjacent property owners within 150 feet of the subject right-of-way vacation were notified of the receipt of the application on Thursday, August 28, 2025. No responses of support or opposition were received. The property was also posted to identify the subject right-of-way to be vacated on Wednesday, August 27, 2025.

The Technical Review Committee members individually reviewed Resolution 2025-108 for the right-of-way vacation and found the application ready for consideration by the Town Commission. The Planning and Zoning Board does not review Right-of-Way Vacation applications.

Mayor Freeman inquired if this right-of-way is part of the old railroad right-of-way on Teague Trail. He stated that there were plans to construct Gardenia Trail and that could not happen if this area is no longer a public area. He inquired as to whether the town could get a guarantee from the developer that this area would be included in the trail should the trail plans come to fruition.

Mr. Carroll stated that the developer would have to agree to this proposal. He stated that he has not seen the alignments of Gardenia Trail recently and is unsure if its location is regards to this property.

Mayor Freeman stated that this project came up for discussion recently and that funding may be available. He expressed his concern that once this right-of-way is vacated, the town cannot get it back.

Mr. Carroll stated that the developer could dedicate an easement to the town or dedicate the right-of-way back to the town. He reiterated that he is unaware of the alignment of the trail and that it could be along Rolling Acres Road.

Martin DelleBovi, Benchmark Group, 4053 Maple Road, Amherst, New York

Mr. DelleBovi stated that he is unaware of the proposed trail and would need to see the alignment. He stated that 20-inch sewer lines were installed in that area approximately six years ago, along with water lines. He advised that two additional easements in that area will be vacated, and a permanent easement will be installed for both sewer lines and the water lines.

Mayor Freeman stated that many of these trails are parallel to public rights-of-way. He stated that a pedestrian crossing could be constructed.

Commissioner Roberts clarified with Mayor Freeman that he is referring to shared-use, non-motorized trails, aka SUNtrails. She stated these trails would not be a motorized throughway.

Mayor Freeman stated that if this trail project comes to fruition, he wants the town to be included.

Mr. DelleBovi stated that easements for public access have been constructed across property to provide site transversal. He stated that he would need to know the exact details of the project to isolate it from parking and landscape areas.

Mayor Freeman stated that because of the amount of infrastructure that is already in place, the County would have to work around a lot of issues if the trail project proceeds.

Mr. DelleBovi stated that he has seen abandoned railroad lines converted into trails in other municipalities. He stated the old railroad lines in Leesburg, FL, are isolated and not on rights-of-way. These separate railway areas were turned over to the municipality to be converted to trails.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gourlie and seconded by Commissioner Regan, the Commission approved the first and final reading of Resolution 2025-107, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0

3. Resolution 2025-108 – First and Final Reading – Variance – a Resolution Granting a Variance from the Provisions of Chapter 5). Chart 6-2, of the Town of Lady Lake Land Development Regulations which Requires the Side Yard Setback Abutting a Local Roadway to be a Minimum of 20 feet within the MX-8 “Mixed Residential Medium Density” Zoning District. The Variance Request is to Allow a Minimum of 12.5 foot West Side Yard Setback on Property owned by Dennis and Patricia Farrington Trustees, located at 718 Saint Andrews Boulevard, within Lake County Florida. (Thad Carroll)

Growth Management Director Thad Carroll stated that on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, a variance application was filed with the Town of Lady Lake, by Licciardello Construction Inc on behalf of property owners, Dennis and Patricia Farrington Trustees, for property located at 718 Saint Andrews Boulevard, within the Town Limits of Lady Lake, Florida. The Land Use Designation is Mobile Home High Density and the Zoning Designation is Mixed Residential Medium Density. The variance request is pursuant to Chapter 5, Chart 5-2, of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) which requires the side yard abutting a local roadway setback to be a minimum of 20 feet within the MX-8 "Mixed Residential Medium Density" Zoning District.

Staff recommends approval of Resolution 2025-108.

Mr. Carroll stated that the applicants are proposing to locate structures 12.5-feet back from the right-of-way. He stated that this property has two roadway frontages and due to the larger setbacks required for corner lots, the buildable area on this property is significantly reduced. The homeowner is seeking to relocate the driveway to Bay Meadows Lane, where reduced traffic would provide a safer environment for entering and exiting the property. The proposed garage would offer secure storage for the owner's car and golf cart, replacing the existing golf cart storage shed, which will be removed. The existing golf cart garage is located 13.9 feet from the property line, which is presently within the required 20-foot setback.

Mr. Carroll stated that the existing structure was permitted without a variance in 2002.

Mr. Carroll presented a sketch map and an aerial map of the subject property. He stated he measured off the aerial map and it is approximately 28 feet from the corner of the existing structure to the edge of the pavement.

Mr. Carroll stated that there would be enough of a setback where line of sight would not be impeded if the variance is granted.

Notices to inform the surrounding 22 property owners within 150' of the subject property were mailed on Monday, August 25, 2025. Notification signs were posted on the property Monday, August 25, 2025.

Staff have received two letters of support from neighboring property owners.

The Technical Review Committee reviewed Resolution 2025-108 and found it was ready for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Board.

At the September 8, 2025, meeting, the Planning and Zoning Board voted 4-0 to forward Resolution 2025-108 to the Town Commission with the recommendation of approval.

Commissioner Gourlie verified with Mr. Carroll that this is not a significant distance.

Mr. Carroll replied affirmatively, adding that it will be a closer encroachment to the rear of the property.

Commissioner Regan inquired if the smaller structure is currently in place.

Mr. Carroll replied affirmatively noting that granting the variance would provide them with legal documentation that it is a nonconformity with the lot. He reiterated that the permit was issued in 2002 and there is no evidence that the variance was granted.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sage and seconded by Commissioner Roberts, the Commission approved the first and final reading of Resolution 2025-108, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawrence commended the finance department for working with town staff to create the FY 2025-2026 budget.

Mr. Lawrence commended Sgt. Charles Gehrsitz who graduated from the FBI National Academy.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Gourlie acknowledged that the grass has been cut along Hwy 27/441.

Public Works Director C. T. Eagle, speaking from the audience, clarified that the grass is cut by FDOT.

1 Commissioner Sage stated that the median and the area in front of Home Depot do not
2 appear to have been mowed in months.

3 C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director

4 Mr. Eagle advised that those areas are located on Lake County roads, and the town does not
5 maintain Lake County roads. He advised that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the
6 maintenance of the Hwy 27/441 corridor will be presented at an upcoming commission
7 meeting.

8 Commissioner Gourlie suggested the town mow those areas and bill the county.

9 Mr. Eagle stated that the county would not reimburse the town.

10 Mr. Lawrence stated that he discussed this with the Lake County manager, Jennifer Barker,
11 advising her that the town has been maintaining the County roads that are within town limits
12 and has not been reimbursed from the County. He stated that Ms. Barker indicated that she
13 was unaware that the town was doing this and would investigate it. Mr. Lawrence stated that
14 she was also not aware of the agreement the town has with Lake County that the town would
15 utilize approximately \$88,000 from the town's tree fund to landscape the median on CR 466.

16 Mr. Lawrence stated these conversations came about due to the survey being conducted
17 through Lake 100. The consultant asked the municipalities who joined this group what their
18 municipalities do for the County outside their town limits. Mr. Lawrence stated that he
19 discussed how the town maintains County roads within town limits. He stated that many of
20 the County representatives were surprised to learn this.

21 Mr. Eagle added that the town has mowed these areas for approximately 20 years.

22 Commissioner Roberts stated that on Friday, September 12, 2025, she and Mayor Freeman
23 attended a meeting of the Heartland League of the Cities. She stated one topic of discussion
24 was the SUNtrails around the state and particularly in Lake County. She stated it was
25 interesting to learn the process of converting the former CSX railways into the trails and
26 design to connect them with other municipalities. She stated this is difficult work and the
27 state is funding approximately \$50M annually for this project, which is for the benefit of all
28 the citizens of Florida and its visitors. She stated that she is in favor of the trail project.

29 Commissioner Roberts stated that the commissioners received a letter dated September 8
30 from a woman named Mary Kay, who has a Lady Lake address and is asking the
31 commissioners to be very transparent and consider what the commissioners do with regards
32 to millage. She stated that her request is misdirected due to the fact that she resides in one of
33 the unincorporated parcels in the historic side of Lady Lake in The Villages. These parcels

1 have a Lady Lake address yet are actually in unincorporated Lake County. There are also
2 parcels with a Lady Lake postal address that are in Sumter County.

3 Commissioner Roberts stated that if your tax bill has BOCC listed, that refers to the Board of
4 County Commissioners and questions or comments need to be directed to the Lake County
5 commissioners.

6 **ADJOURN**

7 Mayor Freeman stated that he did not have any Public Comment cards and adjourned the
8 meeting. Dr. Reverend Paul Harsh stated that he had filled out a card and left it on the table
9 instead of giving it to the Recording Clerk.

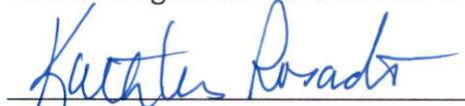
10 Attorney Schroth advised that Dr. Harsh is permitted to express his comments.

11 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

12 Reverend Dr. Paul Harsh stated that at a previous commission meeting he suggested a
13 workshop meeting with the town commission to discuss building a bridge on mutual
14 integrity. He expressed his disappointment that a workshop meeting has not been scheduled.

15 **ADJOURN**

16 There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

17 

18 Kathleen Rosado, Town Clerk

19 

20 Ed Freeman, Mayor