

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

March 17, 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

Rabbi Zev – Temple Shalom of Central FL

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; Pam Winegardner, Finance Director; Joella LeDonne, Assistant Finance Director; Aly Herman, Library Director; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; Police Chief Steve Hunt, Deputy Chief Jason Brough, Lt. Rob Tempesta, Lt. Allen Greene, Lt. James Dunagan, Lady Lake Police Department; Sgt. Michelle Bilbrey, Sgt. Thomas Sarakinis; Detective Ronnie Williams; Detective Brian Campbell; Cpl. Andru Eckerdt; Officer Robert Chausse; Officer Adam Cronk; Officer Joshua Higgins; Officer Jesse Pettis, Lady Lake Police Department; Elvira Ruis, Records Supervisor Lady Lake Police Department; Mary Mullen, Records Associate, Lady Lake Police Department; Elaine Kuligowski, Administrative Assistant, Lady Lake Police Department; Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk and Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk.

Town Attorney Derek Schroth was also in attendance.

A. PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction and Swearing In of New Lieutenants, James Dunagan and Allen Greene. (Chief Steve Hunt)

Police Chief Hunt stated that with the commission's support the police department has improved in several areas. He stated that currently there are four patrol squads that rotate biweekly working 6AM-6PM and 6PM-6AM. He stated that the newly appointed lieutenants will work 12PM-midnight allowing them to spend six hours with each team to offer direction and mentoring. With the addition of the new lieutenants and prospective officers, the department is nearly fully staffed.

Chief Hunt introduced James Dunagan stating he began his career with the Lady Lake Police Department in 2024 as a detective. He previously served with the Leesburg Police Department for 27 years, is highly regarded in the Lake County law enforcement community and is an exceptional teacher. Chief Hunt acknowledged Lt. Dunagan's family who were in attendance.

Chief Hunt administered the oath to Lieutenant James Dunagan. Lt. Dunagan was honored by his son who placed the Lieutenant Gold Badge on his uniform.

Chief Hunt introduced Allen Greene stating he came to the Lady Lake Police Department from the Altamonte Springs Police Department where he served for 17 years achieving the rank of lieutenant. He retired in 2019. Wanting to return to law enforcement he applied and was hired by the Lady Lake Police Department from a group of approximately 17 applicants. Chief Hunt acknowledged Lt. Greene's family who were in attendance.

Chief Hunt administered the oath to Lieutenant Allen Greene. Lt. Greene was honored by his wife who placed the Lieutenant Gold Badge on his uniform.

B. CONSENT

- 1. March 3, 2025 – Special Town Commission Minutes**
- 2. March 3, 2025 – Town Commission Meeting Minutes**
- 3. 2025 Annual Concurrency Report**

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

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Approval to contract with the Center for Public Safety for the Purpose of conducting Pre-Design Services, Staffing Study and Space Needs Study. (Chief Steve Hunt)

Chief Hunt stated that at the commission workshop in February, Stockton Reeves with the Center for Public Safety, presented his portfolio along with a proposal for predesign services. The services

include a space needs analysis and a staffing analysis at a cost of \$25,000. Chief Hunt stated the information in these reports will be used to determine staffing needs for up to 20 years, along with the space needs within that time frame. These are detailed reports that analyze the department's call volume, types of calls they respond to, and the time it takes from time of arrest and transporting to the sheriff's office in Lake County for booking. Additional information acquired will be useful in determining the number of personnel needed, particularly regarding the town's projected growth.

Finance Director Winegardner stated a contingency line item is budgeted every year that may be used if necessary to cover this cost, which would be a budget transfer. She advised that the police department ended FY 2022-2023 under budget. She stated that if the police department follows suit again this fiscal year, the police budget would cover this expense. She advised that approval of this agenda item includes securing the budget transfer if needed.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she has discussed this agenda item with the constituents in her ward and the majority support conducting the study. Mayor Freeman advised he has received the same feedback from constituents in his ward.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the contract with the Center for Public Safety for Pre-Design Services; Commissioner Sage seconded. Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

2. Town Manager Annual Salary Adjustment. (Bill Lawrence)

Town Manager Lawrence humbly stated that he would accept what the commission desires.

Mayor Freeman stated that the past practice is to give the town manager the same increase as the employees received at the beginning of the fiscal year, which was 5%.

Commissioner Gourlie confirmed with Mr. Lawrence that he will be manager for two more years.

Mr. Lawrence clarified that there are two years remaining in his contract. The commission considers his salary increase at this time each year. He stated that he does not receive an increase in October when the employees receive their raises.

Commissioner Regan verified that the commission is considering a 4% or 5% salary increase.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she is in favor of giving Mr. Lawrence the same 5% pay raise as the rest of the town's employees. She stated that the town is operating well and believes that is directly related to the town's leadership.

Commissioner Sage made a motion to give the town manager a 5% annual salary increase; Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

D. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

1. Ordinance 2025-04 — First Reading — an Ordinance of the Town of Lady Lake, Florida; Amending Ordinance 2023-01, Section 2-200.28 of the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Lady Lake, Florida, Setting Forth New Procedures for the Use of the Town's Community Building, Establishing Fees, Deposits, Limitations and Exemptions on Rentals; Providing for Severability; Providing for Repeal of Conflicting Ordinance and Resolutions; Providing for an Effective Date. (Nancy Wilson)

Town Clerk Wilson stated that the commission approved a request by the police department in November 2024 to increase the hourly rate for off-duty police officers, from \$45 to \$60. She advised that the community building ordinance needs to be updated to reflect this amendment because anybody renting the community building and serving alcohol must hire our off-duty police officers for security. This fee is paid by the renter and does not affect the town's budget. She advised that the ordinance contains verbiage that if there is another rate increase, the ordinance references police policy, and an ordinance amendment would not be required.

Mayor Freeman asked about the fee for the police cruiser.

Finance Director Winegardner stated that our officers use town vehicles when they are hired for off-duty assignments, and that fee is charged to the group or individual hiring the officer.

Commissioner Sage stated the cost of renting the community building is \$20 per hour with a four-hour minimum. If alcohol is being served the rate increases to \$80 per hour. He asked if there has been a history of alcohol abuse. He stated that because the community building is located next to the ball fields there is usually Lady Lake police or Lake County sheriff presence nearby. He stated this seems like an unfair expense to charge the taxpayers this cost because they want to serve alcohol at their event.

Ms. Wilson stated that she does not know when this began yet she has seen it in ordinances that have been updated for ten to twenty years.

Mayor Freeman stated that it seems alcohol has been permitted for a long time.

Ms. Wilson outlined the hourly rate structure for local residents, out-of-town residents, and organizations. She stated if the renter plans to serve alcohol, in addition to the hourly rate for the community building, the renter must hire a police officer at an hourly rate of \$60, plus the one-time fee of \$20.

Mayor Freeman clarified that this ordinance reflects the increase in the hourly rate for the police officer, not because alcohol will be served. The alcohol generates the requirement for security.

Commissioner Sage stated it is a four-hour minimum to rent the community building without alcohol and asked if this is the same policy for hiring a police officer.

Ms. Wilson stated that it is a three-hour minimum for an off-duty officer.

Commissioner Sage asked Chief Hunt if there is a history of police being dispatched to the community building because of an event where alcohol was served.

Chief Hunt stated that per Deputy Chief Brough, there is no history of alcohol-related problems at the Community Building.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that an officer should be present because if no one in authority is monitoring the event, there may be underage drinking.

Chief Hunt stated there is potential for liability when alcohol is present. He clarified that the original ordinance had language specific to the off-duty work rules and it should simply be following current police policy, which is a three-hour minimum, \$60 per hour, a \$20 one-event administrative fee (not a vehicle fee).

Commissioner Roberts stated that she contacted other venues around Lake County and found that having a police officer present is a common stipulation if alcohol is being served.

Mayor Freeman stated that he attended an event at the Water Oak community where alcohol was being served, and the fire marshal required the presence of certified crowd management personnel due to the venue being close to maximum occupancy.

Commissioner Regan asked who is responsible for cleaning the room.

Ms. Wilson answered that the renters are responsible for cleaning, which is the purpose of collecting a security deposit at time of rental.

**Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-04 on first reading;
Commissioner Gourlie seconded.**

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

Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawrence stated the Spring Concert Series at Snooky Park begins this Saturday, March 22, at 11AM.

Mr. Lawrence announced that Finance Director Pam Winegardner is retiring May 1. Ms. Winegardner has been with the town for 19 years and has received financial awards every year for financial reporting.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Sage stated that he participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade at Spanish Springs and commended Police Chief Hunt and the police department for their presence. He stated the event was flawless and he is very proud of the town's police department.

Mayor Freeman stated that he and Commissioner Roberts are attending the Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days in Tallahassee beginning Monday, March 24.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Danielle Stroud, CEO for Habitat for Humanity Lake/Sumter

Ms. Stroud thanked the commission for all they do for the town and its residents. She stated that there are currently 18 homes under construction in Lake and Sumter counties, and an additional 40 homes under critical home repair. She stated that Habitat for Humanity has had a strong relationship with the Town of Lady Lake.

Ms. Stoud advised that the County donated a parcel of land to Habitat for Humanity located off Rolling Acres Road, and she will be evaluating the property for its highest and best use. The core mission of Habitat is to enable home ownership for individuals and families earning 80% or below the area's median income. These are essential, hardworking community members that are seeking an opportunity to be homeowners.

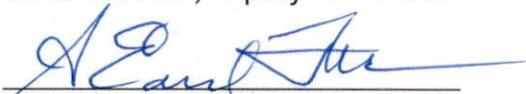
Ms. Stroud stated that she would like to discuss the proposed development at a future commission in the event this property is annexed into the town.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk



Ed Freeman, Mayor