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

July 20, 2026

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.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Kathy Rosado, Town Clerk; Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; Police Chief Steve Hunt, Lady Lake Police Department; Deputy Chief Jason Brough, Lady Lake Police Department; Lt. Allen Green, Lady Lake Police Department; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; Mike Burske, Parks and Recreation Director; John Pearl, I.T. Director; Joella LeDonne, Finance Director; Brandi Carson, Assistant Finance Director; Tamika DeLee, Human Resources Director; Rodolpho Gutierrez, Staff Assistant to Town Clerk; and Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk.

Town Attorney Taylor Tremel was also in attendance.

3. **INVOCATION**

   Led by Reverend Debbie Casanzio – Lady Lake United Methodist Church.

4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

5. **PRESENTATIONS**

   There were no presentations.

6. **CONSENT — (Public Comment Taken)**

a. **Town Clerk's Office** — Approval of the Commission Special Conceptual Workshop Minutes — July 6, 2026. (Kathy Rosado)

b. **Town Clerk's Office** — Approval of the Commission Special Conceptual Workshop Minutes — July 6, 2026. (Kathy Rosado)

Upon a motion by Commissioner McLea and seconded by Commissioner Sage, the Commission approved the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Finance** — Consideration of Approval to Award Requests for Proposal (RFP) 2026-0002 for Auditing Services to Mauldin & Jenkins. (Joella LeDonne)

Finance Director Joella LeDonne stated that the Town issued RFP 2026-0002 to solicit qualified firms to provide auditing services on March 31, 2026. The RFP closed on June 30, 2026, at 2 pm, with three proposals received by the submission deadline. The selection committee completed its proposal review and evaluation based on established criteria, including experience, qualifications, proposed approach, and cost.

Staff recommends awarding RFP 2026-0002 for professional auditing services to Mauldin & Jenkins.

Following a comprehensive evaluation process, Mauldin & Jenkins was determined to demonstrate strong qualifications, relevant experience, and a competitive cost proposal. Their proposal included free unlimited correspondence, free periodic continuing education for the Finance department, no hidden costs, and a specific audit approach. She stated that this firm is located in Bradenton, Florida.

Commissioner Roberts inquired how many people were on the selection committee.

Ms. LeDonne stated the selection committee comprised of five members, C.T. Eagle, PW Director, Mike Burske, Parks & Recreation Director, Kathy Rosado, Town Clerk, Thad Carroll, Growth Management Director; and herself.

Commissioner Roberts stated for the record that she emailed Ms. LeDonne verifying that this budgeted line item is divided amongst three departments.

Ms. LeDonne replied affirmatively, 50% is paid from the finance budget, 25% is paid from the water budget, and 25% is paid from the sewer budget.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner McLea, the Commission approved the bid award RFP 2026-0002 to Mauldin & Jenkins for Auditing Services, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

b. **Information Technology and Public Works — Consideration of Approval to Enter into Master Marketing, Option and Lease Agreement with SQF, LLC (dba Verta Wireless) to Lease Specific Town Properties to Wireless Service Providers to Construct and Operate Wireless Communication Facilities. (John Pearl)**

I.T. Director John Pearl stated that at the January 21, 2026, Commission Workshop, staff met with the Commission to discuss funding the future without property taxes. During this discussion, the Town Manager stated staff would bring ideas for alternative revenue generation to this Commission for consideration in the future.

On February 13, 2026, staff received an unsolicited email from Billy Patterson, Finance and Site Acquisition Consultant of Verta Wireless, stating that they had identified several possible wireless tower locations on Town property that had the potential to improve the current wireless service for our community and provide a new, continuing revenue opportunity for the Town.

Town staff have since met with Verta Wireless staff on multiple occasions to understand their proposal, to review agreement language and potential site locations.

The following agreement details are highlighted below:

- Verta Wireless will have the exclusive right to market and lease each approved property to wireless service providers for a maximum of ten years. Structured as an initial five-year term, with the option of five consecutive one-year extensions.
- Verta Wireless must obtain Commission approval for each tower construction project.
- The total lease agreement term for each property will be a maximum of forty years. The initial five-year term, with the option of seven additional five-year terms.
- Thirteen properties are included in the proposed agreement.

- Properties may be added or removed upon mutual consent of Verta Wireless and the Town.
- The property to be leased at each site will measure approximately 2,500 square feet.
- The proposed towers will be monopole style and will not exceed 199 feet tall.
- Each tower can accommodate a maximum of four wireless service provider tenants.
- The Town may install and operate its own communications equipment on the constructed towers for municipal purposes without charge.
- The Town will receive $5,000 from Verta Wireless upon entering into this agreement.
- The Town will receive a $10,000 incentive payment per tower, payable upon completion of construction.
- Verta Wireless will pay the Town thirty percent of the monthly gross rental revenues collected from all carrier leases.
- Verta Wireless has agreed to commence construction of at least one approved communications facility within three years of the effective date, subject to conditions within Verta's control.
- Verta Wireless has agreed to provide an annual audited report for each tower site.
- The proposed agreement has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.
- Verta Wireless representatives are available remotely via Teams to answer your questions.

Commissioner Roberts verified with Mr. Pearl that there would be one tower on each of the potential 13 sites.

Mayor Freeman stated inquired to the proximity of cell towers near Guava Street.

Colin Hanley – Verta Wireless, via Teams

Mr. Rolander explained that the carriers are using frequencies that do not propagate as far as they used to, especially in high-density population areas. The carriers are offered additional options to be able to develop new infrastructure and decide if they want to install a tower on a particular site.

Commissioner Regan asked Mr. Pearl if the first tower would be operational in three years. He inquired why the vendor decided on a total of 13 cell towers.

Mr. Pearl clarified that they committed to begin the project within three years.

Mr. Hanley stated that each time a carrier expresses interest in developing a site, they compile the information and submit it to the town officials for final approval. He explained that the reason they located 13 sites was that they could utilize a different location if the commissioners rejected a tower close to the initial site to still build the tower. He stated this allows for better coverage and a financial benefit. He stated that they cross-compare these sites with normal coverage metric from AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, and regional carriers. These properties were reviewed with Town staff. Because of their size, they have the best potential for development and meet coverage goals.

Mr. Pearl verified with Mr. Rolander that they do not intend to build 13 tower sites.

Mr. Roland replied affirmatively, adding that when a site is approved, the neighboring potential site are eliminated from additional tower development.

Commissioner McLea confirmed that four carriers would be on one tower before constructing another tower. Would one carrier not allow another carrier on the same tower?

Mr. Hanley clarified that this would be the case if one tower is close enough and it can address the same coverage gap as a second tower would. He stated that two towers may be required at the north and south ends of town. He stated that this does not change the financial impact and the town would still receive 30% if one or two towers are constructed.

Mr. Hanley stated that the carriers do not have issues sharing the same tower, provided it meets their coverage criteria. He stated that monthly tower rental rates range from approximately $1600 per carrier to approximately $2400 per carrier. He stated that it is dependent on how much the carrier is willing to spend and the carrier's need to be in the town. He stated that because the carriers have not previously had access to municipal properties, they would negotiate higher rental rates.

Mayor Freeman inquired as to the height of these towers compared to the town's water tower.

Mr. Pearl stated that the towers average 150 – 170 feet tall, and cannot exceed 199 feet in height.

Public Works Director C.T. Eagle stated the water tower is 125 feet tall.

Commissioner Sage stated that the town is not benefiting financially. He stated that the tower by WAWA is very big and the generator is loud when the power goes out, and is not a good fit for a quiet area.

John Rolander, Verta Wireless

Mr. Rolander stated that the revenue model was built at 50% capacity for each tower, and they deliberately forecasted carrier rents at 80% of the current regional averages. He explained that each tower at 50% capacity will generate approximately $550,000 - $600,000 over a 30 year period. The revenue stream is fully pledged against debt service, is unencumbered in any way, and Verta pays for all the maintenance, including fencing and landscaping around the towers.

Mr. Rolander reiterated that the town can reject a proposed location; Verta pays all expenses, and the town has the right to reject any proposed location.

Commissioner Regan inquired if other carriers are considering installing their own towers directly without working with Verta.

Mr. Rolander stated that Verta Wireless is currently constructing towers in Florida for all three carriers. He stated that the carriers are familiar with Verta's master marketing strategy and how they structure the public and private partnerships with communities. They have requested that Verta focus on Lake County and Polk County because they have a lot of unmet needs for coverage in these communities, which is the reason Verta contacted Lady Lake.

Town Attorney Taylor Tremel requested that the Verta representative identify in the agreement the verbiage permitting the town the ability to reject construction on any proposed site.

Mr. Hanley stated revisions can be made when the site plan is submitted to the town. He stated if the plans are not approved, construction would be done on that site, and an alternative site would be proposed. This is the purpose of proposing several sites in a location.

Mr. Rolander stated a site lease for a particular parcel cannot be registered with Lake County if there is no agreement.

Attorney Tremel clarified that the language in the agreement suggests that the town may reject a site plan, provide detailed feedback describing the necessary changes, and those changes must be approved. He stated that there is no absolute language in the agreement that provides the town the ability to reject.

Billy Patterson – Verta representative

Mr. Patterson clarified the agreement states that the town may schedule a meeting to discuss the development of the site, and provide preliminary approval if acceptable to the town.

The agreement was reviewed by the town's attorney. The agreement could be approved contingent upon amending the agreement with concise language.

Commissioner Roberts stated that she is in favor of the agreement provided the verbiage is amended and acceptable with the town attorney. She acknowledged that this is an alternative revenue source for the town.

Commissioner Sage requested a report with projected revenue from one or more towers. He stated that the revenue should be much greater than the proposed revenue in the agreement.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner McLea, the Commission approved tabling this item to the August 3, 2026, Town Commission meeting, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0

c. **Public Works — Consideration of approval to begin property acquisition negotiations with property owners related to the upcoming Wastewater Treatment Expansion Project. (C.T. Eagle)**

Public Works Director C.T. Eagle stated that staff is seeking authorization to begin property acquisition search and negotiations with interested property owners. The recently adopted Wastewater System Master Plan identified the need for an additional 40 acres of Rapid Infiltration Basins (RIBs) to accommodate the effluent disposal for the proposed 3 MGD Water Reclamation Facility. Attached to this agenda item is a map and a list of potential properties that may be suited to the proposed RIB sites. The listed property owners, including the Lake County School Board, have shown interest in potentially selling. As the search progresses, other properties may be identified as suitable sites and may be included in discussions and negotiations. Once all the due diligence is performed before the purchase, including environmental assessments, geotechnical soil testing, and price negotiations, staff will bring the final contracts back to the Town Commission for final approval.

Commissioner McLea inquired if the basins emit an odor.

Mr. Eagle replied negatively, adding that the liquid is treated effluent, similar to potable water.

Commissioner Regan inquired how many acres are required for this project and asked if it is better to have the properties close together.

Mr. Eagle stated approximately 60-80 acres are needed to accommodate the 40 acres required for the RIBS. The engineer will design the layout. He stated that these potential properties are located near the public works facility, where the infrastructure is already in place.

Mayor inquired how often the RIBS are utilized.

Mr. Eagle stated that it depends on the weather. They do not get used frequently during the drier times because the liquid is sent out for reuse. The liquid is discharged during the rainy season, and it is shared with The Villages.

Upon a motion by Commissioner McLea and seconded by Commissioner Regan, the Commission authorized the Public Works Director to begin property acquisition negotiations with property owners related to the upcoming Wastewater Treatment Expansion Project, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

d. **Town Attorney — Consideration of Approval of the First Amendment to Amended and Restated Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Reservation and Bulk Treatment Agreement. (Taylor Tremel)**

Town Attorney Taylor Tremel stated that with the expiration date of September 8, 2026, approaching, the City of Fruitland Park resumed discussions in 2024 regarding an amended agreement. The City of Fruitland Park had not yet begun any construction or design, for that matter, of a treatment facility of its own to treat its current and projected flows. Given that completion of their own plant could not occur before the expiration of the current agreement, an amendment was sought from the City of Fruitland Park to extend the term of the current agreement.

On Monday, July 21, 2025, following several discussions, the Town Commission voted to extend the expiration date from September 8, 2026, to September 8, 2028. As part of granting the extension, the Town Commission gave direction to draft an amended agreement with performance conditions, or benchmarks, to ensure that the City of Fruitland Park would continue to advance with their own processes to ultimately have their own wastewater treatment system, independent of the Town of Lady Lake.

The amended agreement, which has been proposed for your consideration and adoption, includes a maximum allocation of 150,000 gpd. The vast reduction of allocated capacity is necessary for the Town of Lady Lake to provide capacity for its own vested development that has already been approved, although the Town of Lady Lake is also underway with its own wastewater treatment expansion project to provide additional treatment capacity. The City of Fruitland Park's current wastewater flow is 80,000 gpd.

The term of the amended agreement is from the date of execution until September 1, 2030, unless earlier terminated or extended by mutual written agreement. Flow rates and charges will be reviewed and adjusted annually during the term of the agreement.

Town Manager Bill Lawrence stated that the city manager from the City of Fruitland Park sent an email informing him that the City has made significant progress towards the construction of their wastewater treatment plant.

Commissioner Roberts inquired whether the timelines are developed within the normal timeframes that the City of Fruitland Park can easily fulfill and that they are not set up for failure.

Mr. Lawrence replied affirmatively.

Bob Wille, 843 Berryhill Circle, Fruitland Park

Mr. Wille expressed his concerns regarding how the City of Fruitland Park neglected to address this issue.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner Regan, the Commission approved the First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Reservation and Bulk Treatment Agreement with the City of Fruitland Park, by the following roll call vote:

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

Motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

7. MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Roberts stated that she met with the Library Director and the IT Director, and she commended them for informing her of the issues.

Commissioner Sage expressed his displeasure with the brightness of the signs at the new Walmart on County Road 466.

Mayor Freeman stated that he attended the Florida League of Mayors meeting at Cape Canaveral.

Mayor Freeman stated that he is the president of the Heartland League of Cities and he spoke at the Lake County Board of County Commissioners meeting. He urged them to postpone discussing their new comprehensive plan until after the November election. He stated that request was received favorably.

Commissioner McLea stated that on August 7, she will attend a Back to School event on behalf of the Town. This event is a celebration of the teacher in the Lake County district.

8. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bill Lawrence acknowledged Growth Management Director Thad Carroll who filled in for him while he was on vacation.

The Budget Workshop is Tuesday, July 21 at 1 p.m.

9. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Tremel stated the Grand Oaks hearing has been rescheduled to September.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Debbie Hobbs

Ms. Hobbs expressed her thoughts on how similar lessons are taught by other religions.

Roberta Ricciadri

Ms. Ricciadri expressed her thoughts regarding DEI initiatives and policies, and quoted Bible verses.

Gary Conyers

Mr. Conyers requested canceling the Book Page subscription available at the library.

Laura Conyers

Ms. Conyers requested canceling the Book Page subscription available at the library, and honoring Charlie Kirk Day.

Gail Carlins

Ms. Carlins expressed her thoughts regarding certain books she feels should not be available at the library.

John Labriola, Christian Family Coalition

Mr. Labriola requested canceling the Book Page subscription available at the library, honoring Charlie Kirk Day.

Jason Accurso

Mr. Accurso expressed his thoughts regarding discussing municipality issues.

Paul Harsh, Lady Lake Baptist Church

Mr. Harsh stated that he will not stop expressing his opinion regarding homosexuality.

11. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Kathleen Rosado

Kathleen Rosado, Town Clerk

Ed Freeman, Mayor