

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

August 27, 2024

The special 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 Ed Freeman presiding. The meeting convened at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Mayor Freeman led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Lawrence, Town Manager; Pam Winegardner, Finance Director; John Pearl, IT Director; C.T. Eagle, Public Works Director; Mike Burske, Parks & Recreation Director; Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director; Dawn Woods, Accountant I; Joella LeDonne, Assistant Finance Director; Steve Hunt, Police Chief; Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of the Lady Lake Membership Level at the Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Freeman said that at the last commission meeting held on August 19th, the lease agreement with the Chamber of Commerce was discussed. The membership level was also discussed, and it occurred to him after the meeting that it had not been on the agenda, only

the lease agreement was, therefore, the commission members were not prepared to discuss membership at that time.

Commissioner Regan asked at what level of membership is the town now. Mayor Freeman responded that we are at the partner level which has been budgeted for the next fiscal year at \$10,000.

Commissioner Gourlie stated that he understood that the town would like the Chamber to become self-sufficient, but he does not think it is fair to pull the rug out from under them without notice. The Town of Lady Lake wants a viable Chamber that has a welcome center open four hours a day. He proposed that since the money has already been budgeted, we should give them time to assess their budget then consider lowering our membership fee to \$7,500 next year. To cut them off now would place them in a negative position and suffocate them.

Commissioner Roberts stated that as a businessperson, she understands budgets. Lady Lake has been contributing to the Chamber at the highest level, Partner, for some time.

Organizations tend to run up to their budgets. She added that we have no problem charging the Little League \$500 to use the concession stand so we can turn around and give that money to the Chamber that is operating for businesses. She understands that it may be too much too soon, but she does not think other Chambers are getting the same level of support from their respective municipalities. Next year's budget has not been adopted so now is the time to make changes. This is the first time since 2016 that we are raising the millage, so we need to perform our due diligence when reviewing our budget.

In response to Commissioner Sage's question regarding how long the town has been a Partner member, Ms. Jeanne Lazo said she believed it has been 17 years. He then asked if we were the revenue anchor 17 years ago to which she responded affirmatively. Commissioner Sage commented that they surely must have more members now especially with the growth we have had over the last five years. Ms. Lazo said their membership is between 250-270 members which remains stable, but a lot of their memberships are at the lowest fee levels. Their 5-year plan includes working on member benefits to help the Chamber grow.

Ms. Lazo said they canvas new businesses, but they do not have a marketer; they only have two employees who run everything. Also, big businesses do not need the Chamber as much as smaller businesses who have less money to spend on memberships and usually pay for the

base level at \$275. Commissioner Sage is comfortable keeping the membership level at Partner but he feels the Chamber should perform more outreach activities.

Mayor Freeman said he was unaware that we charged Little League and the soccer team to use the concession stands; he does not know where that came from or if the amount paid covers the cost of maintenance. He would like to discuss removing those fees. Mayor Freeman agreed with Commissioner Gourlie that cutting off the chamber all at once is not productive for anybody. It is in the budget so the town should stay at the Partner level for one year before we consider reducing our membership. He added that it seems like only recently that the Chamber been able to make advances. Ms. Lazo responded that membership numbers have remained the same, but employees Leslie and Janet have worked very hard to bolster the Chamber. She said her committees are active and she feels they have made great strides in the last two years.

Commissioner Gourlie made a motion to stay at the Partner level (\$10,000) for one year then revisit the matter next year once we receive a profit/loss statement from the Chamber; Commissioner Regan seconded. Motion carried 4-1 (Roberts).

Consideration of Approval of FY 2024-2025 Benefits (Medical, Dental, Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, Short Term Disability, Critical Illness, Accident Coverage).

Finance Director Winegardner said the rates listed in the agenda material will become effective on 10/1/2024. Ms. Winegardner read through the benefits that are both employer paid and employee paid. Medical benefits for the upcoming fiscal year including an increase of 3.9% in our health insurance rates with Florida Blue. There are no rate increases for dental, long-term disability or life insurance.

Commissioner Roberts asked what percentage is included in the budget for health insurance. Ms. Winegardner answered that to be conservative, they included a 15% increase then lowered it to 10% and the actual increase turned out to be 3.9%.

Commissioner Sage asked if the 3.9% increase is just for Florida Blue. Ms. Winegardner answered in the affirmative adding that the others did not increase. We are self-insured; we joined a pool, and it keeps our costs down.

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

Consideration of Expenditure for New Security Cameras around Lady Lake.

IT Director Pearl said since early June, staff has been working on a proposal to replace the existing physical security technology at Town Hall, the police department and the fuel depot. The scope of the project includes access control, alarm, panic and intercom. Security camera technology is currently installed at the three locations noted above. The replacement proposal was completed late last week, and he seeks approval, so this expenditure will be included in the FY 2025 budget. The existing security technology at the three locations was installed in 2015 and 2016. At that time, the system cost was \$129,000 and it has served the town's needs over the past eight years and provided good value, but it should be replaced at this time. The current access control system has been discontinued, no upgrade path is available, and parts are difficult to source. The current camera system has been banned by Congress in the Secure Equipment Act of 2021 as a threat to national security. It was subsequently banned by the FCC in 2022. Town staff have implemented compensating controls to mitigate some of the identified concerns, but these have also reduced the usefulness of the technology.

The current cameras are now several generations old and have not helped with recent incidents such as the shooting at the Guava Street Athletic Complex. The selected replacement system has been installed at Lake County Sherriff's office and the City of Tavares. Lady Lake police staff have had the opportunity to sit through product demonstrations and have shown enthusiasm about utilizing the new technology. Staff are also working on a similar proposal for the Guava Street Athletic Complex and anticipate bringing that back before the commission at a later date. This contract will piggyback on a Cocoa Beach agreement with a discount of 8%. If approved, installation will begin in October. The impact would be \$168,400.

Commissioner Sage asked if the \$168,000 expenditure will include the Guava playground area to which Mr. Pearl said it would not. This would only cover the Town Hall complex which has 42 cameras. Commissioner Sage asked if the Guava Street Complex has been assessed to determine camera need. Mr. Pearl answered in the affirmative; a proposal is being drafted now.

Mr. Pearl stated that the goal of cameras is to capture faces and license plates; the current technology yields unclear images. Commissioner Sage feels that the Guava Street Complex should be prioritized to provide more security for children because it is a busy area. He added that if the presence of the cameras is made public, it may deter nefarious activities.

Commissioner Regan asked if security at the Guava Street Complex could be fast-tracked. Mr. Pearl responded that the proposal is currently being worked on by staff.

Commissioner Sage asked if the cameras would be monitored at the police department. Mr. Pearl responded that another advantage of the new technology is that it is a central point DVR system. If a complaint is made, someone on the police staff currently must scrub through the video timeline to find the incident which is slow and often does not yield good results. With the proposed technology, the application is sent out to other police stations so that staff can type in simple terms of what they are looking for during a given timeline and get immediate results.

Commissioner Sage asked if the system had been in place when the shooting happened, would the license plate image have been captured. Mr. Pearl responded that if the proper camera had been mounted in multiple locations, the license plate image would have been captured.

Commissioner Roberts clarified that the current camera system is prohibited so it is no longer optional to get the new system. Mr. Pearl said there is an audit in the fall, and he would like the Town Hall system to be in place by then. She stated that the vulnerabilities must have led to the system being prohibited. Mr. Pearl affirmed her question adding that they have tried to place compensating controls to the current system, but they have not been effective.

Commissioner Sage stated that the new system is prohibited but the government is ok with big brother watching us. Mr. Pearl responded that the government is not only ok with it, but they are also deploying the same technologies themselves, actively and aggressively; it is a force multiplier. If used appropriately, the system will provide more public safety.

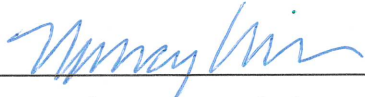
Commissioner Gourlie asked about other locations. Mr. Pearl said they are prioritizing their investment. One of the precursors to having a successful implementation is our fiber system so wherever we have fiber in place, the new system will be easier to install and deploy plus it will be more secure.

In conclusion, Mayor Freeman confirmed that this is a phased project.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the expenditure for new security cameras around Lady Lake; Commissioner Gourlie seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.



Nancy Wilson, Town Clerk



Ed Freeman, Mayor