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

February 13, 2025

A workshop 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Freeman called the meeting to order at 4:11 pm.

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

Commissioner Regan arrived at 4:19 p.m. Commissioner Sage arrived at 4:24 p.m.

AGENDA

Discussion Regarding Building a New Police Department

Police Chief Hunt stated that the police department is quickly outgrowing their current facility. In 2024 he attended an extensive seminar regarding planning a police department hosted by The Center for Public Safety located in Winter Park, FL. This company has designed police departments and public safety departments throughout the country. He stated that he was overwhelmed with the details involved in designing a police facility. With the future growth of Lady Lake, he foresees the need for a larger police department.

Stockton Reeves, Executive Director with The Center for Public Safety

Mr. Reeves stated that there are two companies, The Center for Public Safety that performs much of the up-front work, educational work, and the predesign work. The other company is Architects Design Group, who have designed public safety facilities primarily throughout the country.

Mr. Reeves stated he will review the considerations that go into planning for a law enforcement facility as they are significantly different from other town facilities. He stated that his clients are municipalities and recognizes that all the projects are funded with tax money. The goal of

every project is to save time and to save money. The predesign phase sets the stage to achieve project success.

Mr. Reeves stated that the Center for Public Safety provides staffing studies, space needs studies, Request for Quotation (RFQ), grant writing and funding identifications, and alternative funding sources. He stated that they track approximately 26 different federal grants.

Mr. Reeves stated his company hosts the Planning, Funding and Obtaining New Public Safety Facilities seminar. The seminar was birthed from years of answering the same questions from police chiefs, city and town managers asking how to begin the process to plan for new public safety facilities, the costs involved and the timeframe to completion. He added that he has served as the vice-chairman of the Civil Service Board in Winter Park, a regulatory entity overseeing the police and fire departments in Winter Park. He stated that the Standard Operating Procedures were revised in 2024, and he has learned much regarding hiring and retention. He is a founding member and manages the Friends of Winter Park Police and Firefighters, a 501(c)(3) charity that has been active for approximately 20 years and covers medical expenses not covered by city insurance for these men and women, and their children, funerals, and other expenses.

Mr. Reeves stated that there are three design components to consider when beginning these projects, survivability through strategic site selection and construction so the facility can withstand severe weather, security for police personnel, those in custody, and the public, and sustainability that addresses personnel wellness and environmental compliance.

Mr. Reeves stated that a police department is one of the most expensive buildings a local municipality will build due to many design considerations such as security zones, sally ports, evidence storage, booking area, armory, interview rooms, public lobby, functional spaces, locker rooms, training spaces, decontamination facility, and a command center. He stated it is important that the facility is Department of Corrections certified as all suspects that are in police custody are the responsibility of the police department.

Mr. Reeves discussed the process by which construction costs are figured. He related it to a jigsaw puzzle in that every component has a different cost per square foot due to the size and the function of the department. If the facility is not holding suspects, costs would be less. He acknowledged that construction materials and labor costs fluctuate and that these projects never get less expensive. If the market stabilizes, the cost is still unknown, and tariffs are likely to be implemented. He suggested finding a way to construct the facility sooner rather than later. He stated that while prices are negotiable, experience and qualifications are not. He stated that there are two ways of advertising a project, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), and a Request for Proposal (RFP). If a project is expensive, technology driven, has certain statutory

and regulatory requirements for the building the best avenue to save time and money over the course of the project is to choose the most experienced people.

Mr. Reeves outlined his company's approach for Lady Lake's potential police department. He stated it begins with reviewing the town's strategic plan and meeting with town officials to understand their vision for the project. Conducting a staffing study to evaluate current personnel needs, a space needs study and cost estimate must be performed. Further, alternative funding sources and grants available through federal agencies should be identified and financial contributions from industrial and commercial businesses in the area should be requested.

Mr. Reeves stated that by analyzing current personnel levels and forecasting organizational changes up to twenty years in the future, the staffing studies provide essential data and insights required to make informed workforce decisions. He added that staffing studies enable any public safety entity to effectively plan for its present and future personnel needs. He noted a study in another municipality where he recommended reducing their K9 officers in the future because technology is always evolving, and robotics may be used and could be more cost-effective. He stressed that every person in the police department has a direct effect on the built environment as every square foot of the facility has a financial impact. For instance, patrol officers are not working in the building like detectives, evidence and forensics personnel do.

Mr. Reeves stated that the staffing study will reveal the department's room by room needs, as well as the areas no one plans for such as corridors, mechanical rooms, janitorial closets, IT and server rooms. Any architect, regardless of their experience in public safety, can use the spatial needs assessment to layout and design a building that will function based on this report.

Mr. Reeves advised that they track grants at the federal level. The state of Florida does not offer many grant opportunities. Florida has many people in the current administration and will have influence with the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. He stated that there are special legislative requests that could be sent to our US Senators and members of Congress requesting financial assistance with this project. The Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee have twelve committees and therefore there are twelve appropriations bills for each of those committees throughout the course of the year. There is always an opportunity throughout the year to submit a special legislative request or a rider to an amendment.

Mr. Reeves stated that he has spent many decades in politics, noting that he has worked on hundreds of political bond and voter referendum campaigns in six states, he owned a qualitative and quantitative market research firm that canvassed in 36 states and worked with

every Fortune 500 company. He emphasized that based on his prior experience, he can assist in devising a plan to contact these sources and persuade them to listen to and recognize our needs. He encouraged participation from the commission regarding goals for the project, such as constituents' concerns. Understanding the language of politics is beneficial when writing federal grants. He presented studies conducted in multiple cities that prioritized changes that can be implemented in stages.

Commissioner Gourlie asked if it is cost effective to construct a combined police department and fire station in the same location.

Mr. Reeves stated that there is a significant financial savings putting more than one entity in one building. A joint use facility could house backup IT and an emergency operations center which increases the odds of receiving grants or other funding. He stated that the town would benefit from requesting Lake County contribute to the construction of a fire station near the police department.

Mayor Freeman stated that a police station should have high visibility and our department's current location meets that requirement. He asked as to the viability of renovating this building into a new police station and constructing a new town hall.

Mr. Reeves advised that the current Lady Lake town hall and police department was built prior to Americans with Disabilities Act becoming law and there are compliance issues. He stated that Lady Lake police department does not need visibility as a deterrent. He advised that Lady Lake is growing rapidly, and it is likely that most of the undeveloped land will be sold and developed. It is important to secure the property.

Mayor Freeman asked about the amount of land needed for a new police station.

Mr. Reeves answered that this is determined by the research studies.

Mr. Lawrence asked Mr. Reeves about his partner, Bill Barrett, a grants consultant and lobbyist. He verified that Mr. Barrett could work on other town projects including a wastewater treatment plant and recreation center.

Mr. Reeves stated that Mr. Barrett has represented cities and counties in Florida before the executive and legislative leaders for approximately 30 years. He stated that stormwater mitigation, waste water and wastewater treatment is one of Mr. Barrett's specialties. He stated that in Florida the Senate President and the House Speaker have a two-year term. Because their staff does not change every two years, it is essential to have someone with such institutional connections who can communicate with the Speaker's assistant. Mr. Barrett knows a lot of people at the state level, and he could procure funds for town projects. He stated that if the money requested for our project was denied in committee, a lawmaker may

"sprinkle" the desired funds to the end of a bill at the conclusion of the session. He cautioned that hiring a lobbyist is not a guarantee they will be able to secure the funding required for a project. The proposal is guaranteed to be presented, and the town will have someone well-versed in the procedure.

Mr. Lawrence stated that he has discussed this project with Chief Hunt and confirmed with Mr. Reeves that the predesign study is the initial stage.

Mr. Reeves replied affirmatively reiterating that the two initial studies that are conducted are the staffing study which leads to the space needs assessment, and that leads to the project's estimated cost.

Mr. Lawrence stated that these studies will be included in the upcoming budget.

Mr. Reeves encouraged the commission to examine the projects his company has completed throughout the country, particularly with police agencies, to assess the depth of his company's experience. He stressed that he works only with local governments, particularly in public safety.

Commissioner Gourlie asked if there are any other public safety related agencies that could be in the same building.

Mr. Reeves stated that all jails in Florida are located at the county level, and the police station would have secure interview rooms.

Commissioner Gourlie inquired about the amount of land required for a town our size.

Mr. Reeves stated that if the building is constructed on a smaller parcel, it would have to be a multistory facility. A taller building requires two stairwell corridors, elevator space, and each successive floor must be built to accommodate the structural weight of what will be above it. It is significantly more expensive to construct a multistory facility than a one story facility.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Carol Osborne

Carol Osborne, Deputy Town Clerk

Ed Freeman, Mayor