

Monthly Activity Report June 2024



City Of Leesburg
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Introduction

Welcome to the City of Leesburg Monthly Activity Report. This report aims to provide a concise overview of the various activities, initiatives, and developments that are currently taking place in each of the City's departments. From infrastructure improvements to community engagement initiatives, we continue to make strides in enhancing the quality of life for our residents. Our goal is to ensure transparency, promote accountability, and keep all stakeholders informed about the progress and challenges within our City. As we navigate through the complexities of urban governance, this report serves as a vital tool for communication and collaboration between the City's administration, elected officials, and the community.

Current City Projects and Activities

By Department

Airport

The Airport is excited to announce the Food Truck Fly-In Event on August 24, 2024. This community event is accessible by vehicle and will feature five participating food trucks along with aircraft displays on the Firehawk main ramp. Advertising for this event will commence shortly. Additionally, the Airport will host the 2nd Annual Leesburg Blue Foundation 5K Run on September 21, 2024.

The Airport is collaborating with the Civic Initiatives Procurement subconsultant on several capital projects:

- **Hangar Infrastructure Phase 1:** Construction bids are due on July 1, 2024.
- **Taxiway Delta Rehabilitation:** This project will be ready for construction bidding within two weeks.

SunAir Aviation, Inc. is in the process of designing a new 80 x 100 hangar to accommodate the increasing business jet traffic. Similarly, Skybolt, Inc. is planning an addition to their 20,000 square foot facility. The demand for individual storage hangars continues to grow, prompting the City to fully design plans and specifications for the construction of two multi-unit T-Hangar buildings, one multi-unit Box Hangar building, and one multi-unit Corporate Hangar building over the coming years.

AVCON, Inc., along with their subconsultant ESA, is initiating a preliminary environmental study of the northeast quadrant of the Airport to explore future growth possibilities. It is important to note that upon the completion of current projects, there will be no remaining buildable land at the airport unless wetland mitigation can be justified.

Budget Office

Budget Director Brandy McDaniel and the City Manager continue to work with departments on the FY 25 budget.

Budget highlights include adding 12 additional police officers and 6 new firefighters to keep up with the ever-growing workload demands on public safety.

There is a focus on capital improvement projects and reducing the electric fund transfer. Another priority of the FY 25 budget is to increase the reserve funds of the electric department, as inflation and growth have not caught up with system investments.

Efforts have been made to get the new CRA board members up to speed on budget issues.

The Lake County Property Appraiser's office reports that the City's taxable value will increase by \$733,653,402, bringing the City's total assessed value to \$3.49 billion. This equates to a \$3.2 million increase in property tax revenue and is solely due to the growth of the Villages of West Lake. This amount is \$1 million short of anticipated revenue for FY 25 as there was minimal growth outside of The Villages. Other operations of the City remain mostly unchanged.

The draft budget is scheduled to be disseminated to the City Commission and public by Thursday, June 27, 2024. The City Manager and staff will have significantly more detailed reporting during the budget workshops scheduled for July 2nd, 9th, and 11th, 2024.

Building Department

The Building Department is currently engaged in training city staff on the CD+ program, ensuring they are equipped to handle all front-end programming and maintenance tasks. We are also in the process of completing Master File reviews for projects at Venetian Isles, Silver Lakes, and Southwind Apartment Complexes. In addition to these ongoing projects, the department is reviewing a 32,000 square foot new/renovation project at the Lake Port Square Senior Resident facility, as well as several warehouses, factories, storage facilities, and a new Wawa (located at the northeast corner of West Main St. and CR 468). Most permits are reviewed within two weeks, with larger commercial projects taking up to 30 business days. Urgent matters, such as Red Tags, status checks, and emergencies, are addressed immediately. The department also participates in monthly Fire, Residential Building, and Building Official Meetings to stay updated on the latest fire and building code changes.

Electric Department

The Electric Department is actively upgrading automated switch gear at the Airport Sub-Station (which is located on SR44 near the airport), so that voltages can be better regulated; thereby, providing more efficient service.

The usage of the Team Fishel contract services has been significantly minimized. As a result, our distribution crews have started self-performing most new service installations and are identifying opportunities for additional work activities within commercial projects. This action has been taken to save money.

Service Planning is currently working on the layout for Fruitland Park School and Lake County, completing the design for on-site work, and identifying make-ready work and Customers Aid in Contribution (CIAC) for the relocation of existing facilities on Urick Street and Olive Avenue. Additionally, Electric Department staff collaborated with LakeFront TV, social media, and the City's website to promote and inform customers about our surge protection services offered through the Meter Treater program.

The department in conjunction with IT is currently reviewing options for metering. The current GE SmartGrid agreement expires on December 31, 2026. This contract costs approximately \$1.5M annually or \$4.63 per meter per month. GE has formally provided the City notice that they do not want to renew the service at the end of the term. As a result, significant work is beginning to recommend to the City Commission a metering method moving into the future. At this time staff is opening communication with GE and Itron to determine the possibilities of shifting the workload from GE to their sub-contractor Itron. Staff will also examine new metering possibilities. A fuller report will be provided to the EAB and City Commission in the next 30-60 days.

Finance Department

Risk Management

The Risk Management team is striving for 100% compliance in updating Certificates of Insurance (COI) for all contractors and vendors required to have a current COI on file. In-house development is underway for a new claim tracking system and accident forms, alongside the creation of a new safety manual, which is currently under departmental review.

Customer Service

Customer Service is working towards implementing a paperless system/app for new customers who walk in. Additionally, efforts are being made to collaborate with Homeowners Associations (HOAs) to educate customers on the importance of keeping areas around meters and meter boxes clear.

Finance

The Finance Department is focused on developing an improved cash flow model to enhance the management of investments and the tracking of large projects.

Fire Department

The Fire Department is currently engaged in collective bargaining negotiations with the firefighter's union, with the aim of reaching a tentative agreement within the next few weeks. We are collaborating with Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) on a Community Risk Assessment and a Standard of Cover for the City, which will enhance the safety of our citizens and first responders. Our training staff is preparing to conduct a new hire orientation class for firefighters who have recently completed their fire standards. Additionally, preparations are underway to receive a replacement fire truck to update our aging fleet.

Gas Department

City contractor, Precision Meter, installed 15 new gas services, while our in-house distribution crews installed an additional 6 new gas services. Two new service technicians, Elvis Trejo and Jeffery White, successfully passed their first round of field operator qualifications.

Crews responded to and safely managed an excavation-damaged high-pressure service line on County Road 48 at lift station #72. Phases L1 and S1 of the County Road 470 6" main relocation were completed, and service was successfully initiated for Hillcrest Memorial Crematory, which is expected to be a significant consumer.

The solar unit operating our SCADA communications at was upgraded. Our cathodic protection crews located and repaired two shorts, maintaining the integrity of the system during gas main inspections and purging in The Villages.

The final phase of the Newell Hill Regulator Station rebuild is underway. The annual leak survey, conducted by in-house staff, continues with leaks being repaired as they are found. Additionally, annual maintenance of regulator stations is ongoing.

Housing Department

The Housing Department is actively renovating a house at 1115 CR 468 to prepare it for rental through the Lake County Section 8 Program. We are also collaborating with the Lake Community Action Agency Contract Administrator to monitor progress and resolve issues related to the Home Repair Grant Program, with six homes currently in the rehab process. Maintenance of the Mispah Simmons Apartment Complex is ongoing, with parts being ordered and repairs scheduled to meet Lake County Housing Quality Standards.

In addition, we are working with the Lake County Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity on the logistical setup for a Farm Share Food Giveaway event at the Resource Center, scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 2024. We are also interviewing a potential new community partner, another division of Kids Central—Healthy Start, for the office space being vacated by the Kids Central Outreach Division.

Staff is currently updating the surplus property inventory list. Once the list is updated and reviewed by the City Attorney it will be brought before the Commission for further direction. Until such direction is received, there will be no donation or sales of any City inventory.

Human Resource Department

The Human Resources Department is developing an Employee Survey to be reviewed with the Commission's Personnel Committee before rolling it out to the organization. The survey aims to gather valuable feedback from employees to identify strengths and areas for improvement. To ensure maximum participation and confidentiality, meetings will be held with employees to explain the survey's importance and assure them of the confidentiality of their responses.

We are also working with our insurance broker to finalize the implementation of the online benefit program, Employee Navigator. This program will enable new and current employees to make benefit elections electronically, eliminating paper enrollments.

Barring any major issues, our first online open enrollment process will commence in August 2024. Employees will receive detailed communication and instructions on the new process.

Additionally, Human Resources is expanding its human resources information system (HRIS) to manage and automate core HR processes. Since January 2023, we have implemented a true online application system, making it more convenient for applicants and departments. This fiscal year, we added the Perform module, which will facilitate an online evaluation system, streamlining the process for supervisors and employees. We are in the final stages of developing this system and will update our evaluation policy and meet with supervisors before its introduction. Employees will also receive communication and instructions, though a "go live" date has not yet been set

Information Technology Department

Security remains a top priority for the IT staff. We are currently enhancing our cybersecurity through education and software implementation, including dual authentication, penetration testing, and KnowBe4 training. Additionally, the IT team is configuring and installing a badge door security system at identified entry points to ensure the integrity of data and the safety of staff, along with the installation of additional security cameras across the city. At this time the new City Hall badge security system is 90% complete. The bad security system at the Leesburg Municipal Service Center (LMSC) is being reviewed by Public Works and Building so that the proper foyer can be constructed. The project is currently within the budgeted parameters of \$175,000.

The demand for mobile devices has increased dramatically over the last five years. Both staff and citizens are using phones and tablets for everyday tasks. IT is leveraging this trend by replacing costly laptops with more affordable alternatives. Citizens can receive automatic response information, such as pool operating hours, electric outages, or trash pick-up schedules, through the TextMyGov app. Webform development for internal and external mobile device use is underway, and online registration and payment for Recreation/Marina services are set to go live mid-year.

The IT department is responsible for managing all hardware and software assets within the organization. Hardware and software life cycles are set by industry standards and reviewed annually for redundancy (Servers: 5 years, Desktops: 4-5 years, Laptops: 3-4 years, Printers: 4-5 years, Major Copiers: 10 years). We continuously refresh devices on a rotating basis to maintain efficiency and reliability.

Library Department

The library is currently digitizing and transcribing DVD recordings of *The Other Leesburg* series, produced by Lake Front TV to coincide with the City's sesquicentennial celebration in 2007. Hosted by John Leslie "Les" Johnson, the series gathered stories and remembrances of Leesburg's Black community during the Jim Crow years. This project will preserve these invaluable oral histories and make them available to a wider audience.

The library's annual Summer Library Program for youth ages 0-18 is underway, running from June 3rd – July 27th. Summer Library Program highlights include professional performers and presenters every Wednesday (the June 12 performance had 208 attending), reading challenges for prizes, weekly prize drawings, LIVE Escape rooms, gaming tournaments, Star Wars event, weekly story times for babies and for up to age 5 with special guests from the Leesburg Fire Dept. and the Leesburg Police Dept., weekly family crafters kits, scavenger hunt, PAWS therapy dog event, and more! All programs are free and sponsored by the Friends of the Leesburg Library.

The library is hosting several democracy history and civics events leading up to the Smithsonian Exhibition "Voices and Votes: Democracy in America". This exhibition will be at the Library from November 16, 2024 through January 11, 2025 during all library open hours. It is a self-guided exhibition and we are also accepting requests for guided tours from local community groups and educators. During this time, we will be hosting multiple speakers for programs on the history of Democracy, the Electoral College, Florida's Democracy history, the League of Women Voters Information tables and many more.

Planning and Zoning Department

The Planning and Zoning (P&Z) staff is collaborating with the City's consultant to finalize the Water Supply Plan, which involves updating four elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, we are working with Calvin, Giordano and Associates, Inc. to revise and rewrite the City's Comprehensive Plan, with the first reading planned for September.

Other ongoing projects include the development of the Sunnyside Land Development Regulations and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Map and Text. We are also working on a code amendment related to Dark Sky, landscape buffers, and trees, as well as a Historic Structure Density Bonus code amendment.

See activities report containing completed and current commercial projects submitted to you on Tuesday June 18, 2024.

Police Department

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is actively working with the US Marshal's Task Force and other entities to locate and arrest the suspect involved in the robbery/homicide case at Fast Stop Superette on Picciola Road. Public assistance is still being requested for tips on the suspect's location.

Community Services is preparing for Back-to-School events for the upcoming month. During the summer break, our School Resource Officers have been addressing various homeless issues throughout the city, effectively assisting property owners with trespassers on their properties.

The City is set to host the West Central Florida Police Chiefs conference/meeting on Thursday, June 20th, at 11 AM. Meanwhile, Uniformed Services is developing the public safety plan for the upcoming 4th of July event.

Additionally, Congressman Webster is scheduled to meet with Chief Iozzi on July 2nd to discuss law enforcement needs at the federal level.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department is collaborating with Dewberry Engineers to design a surface water extraction system for irrigating the Sleepy Hollow sports fields. This change is necessary as the SJRWMD and FDEP will not renew the consumptive use permit for the current groundwater well system.

We are also working with UF IAS and BrightView Landscapers to develop a resiliency plan aimed at preventing the spread of Lethal Bronzing Disease (LBD) to palm trees throughout the city. LBD is a serious issue, and we have already lost numerous trees to this disease.

In preparation for FDOT's Turnpike Widening project at Turnpike and US 27, we are developing a plan for the relocation of water, wastewater and gas utilities. Public Works will need to relocate these lines to allow FDOT to drive piles to support the new bridge girders.

Collaboration with Lake County Engineering is ongoing to identify new transportation priority projects that qualify for impact fee funding. Additionally, we are working with Surface Water Professionals, Inc. to develop a report on the City's Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS) and Wastewater Treatment

Public Works Department Continued:

Facility Information. This is in response to a new FDEP requirement that must be fulfilled by August 1, which mandates extensive reporting on private systems and associated infrastructure.

The \$40M Turnpike Wastewater Project continues to move forward on time and on budget with no major issues to report. Jones Edmunds and Associates is approximately 75% design complete on the South Leesburg sewer bypass system.

Purchasing

The Procurement Department is currently working on formal solicitations for the supply and delivery of floating aerators for the Canal Street Wastewater Facility and for IT infrastructure needs. Staff is also meeting with various city departments to review existing requisitions for both large and small projects, confirming timelines, and applying best practices for procuring goods and services.

In addition, we are in the process of reviewing and updating all purchasing-related documents and procedures. Preparations are underway for a citywide training session aimed at department heads and their designees who are involved in the procurement process. This training will ensure everyone is up-to-date with current practices and procedures.

Lastly, we are conducting training sessions on the Purchasing Division's eProcurement platform, Bonfire, in conjunction with Naviline (H5), to ensure a smooth and efficient workflow in the procurement process.

Recreation Department

The Susan Street Project is at 30% design completion. The official TDC Grant Agreement for \$4 million will be on the agenda for approval on July 8, 2024. This project is currently slated as a construction manager at risk project and staff is reviewing initial project costs with design consultants Half and Associates and construction manager Allstate. With regard to budget parameters the commission has secured funding in the amount of \$6.3M and the City Manager will be recommending further funding options during the FY25 workshops.

Programs and signups are ongoing for flag football, adult kickball and soccer, Pop Warner cheer and football, as well as soccer. Additionally, the Leesburg Lightning and Leesburg Thunder seasons are in full swing at Pat Thomas Stadium.

The Marina Project is currently in the Development Review Committee (DRC) process. Construction documents will be finalized shortly after all comments are received. This project should be out to bid within the next 30 to 60 days.

We are in the midst of planning Leesburg's Star-Spangled Spectacular 4th of July event. The first of three Discover Leesburg events was successfully held on Friday, June 14. The next two events are scheduled for the second Fridays of July and August (July 12 and August 9).

The pool is open seven days a week for summer hours and reaches capacity most days. The first two sessions of swimming lessons saw record-setting participation, with 200 and 230 people, respectively.

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