



Welaka Gazette

December, 2021

From The Mayor's Desk

Wow, where has this year gone? It seems like we were just celebrating the 4th of July, and now here we are at Christmas. As we approach the New Year, you will see changes at Town Hall. First, I want to take a moment to acknowledge our new Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon. Meghan has an extensive background in accounting; she is a real asset to our Town, and we are lucky to have her. We will also be bringing on a new Deputy Town Clerk on December 6th. Her name is Carra McCoy; she is a former Deputy Town Clerk and has experience in public administration. With Meghan's background in accounting and Carra's background in public administration, we will be on a firm foundation as we enter the new year. Next time you are in Town Hall, be sure to say hello to both of them.

On a community front, I want to thank everyone who came out and participated in our Spooky Golfcart Parade and Candy Giveaway. We had over 500 people come out that day, and the smiles on the children's faces as they received candy made it all worthwhile. We are looking forward to it being even bigger next year. As you read this newsletter, the Events Committee is putting the final touches on our "Christmas at the River" Festival, set for December 11th. At noon, there will be a Town Christmas Parade, and then we will move to the Down Town Park where Santa will be taking pictures with the children, there will be an Arts and Crafts Festival, and Food Trucks available. We will end the day with a Christmas Tree Lighting and a Boat Parade. For more information or to register for one of our events, visit welakachristmas.com or give us a call at (386) 467-9800.

I am also excited to tell you that the 10 Million, that's right, I said 10 Million Dollar Grant that the Town of Welaka applied for to build a new sewer plant, was approved a few weeks ago by the State of Florida. I want to take the time to acknowledge our Local, State, and Federal supporters of our advanced WasteWater Treatment Plant Grant. On a Local Level, was the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. On a State Level, was State Representative Bobby Payne and State Senator Keith Perry. Lastly, on a Federal Level, was U.S. Senator Marco Rubio. We are also applying for a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant in the amount of \$536,188.00 to fund our Critical Lift Stations Backup Pumps Project. This vital project will place by-pass pumps at all of our critical lift stations in the Town of Welaka, ensuring that during a power outage or a pump failure, the Town's sewer system does not go down and continues to operate for our residents. It will also ensure our environment is protected by preventing sewage from running out onto the ground. Still, more importantly, it will prevent it from running into the St. Johns River. If we receive both Grants, this will put the Welaka Utility Department on a firm foundation for the future.

As we close out this year, I want to thank those who have supported and helped me in my first eight months in office. There have been some growing pains as we have transitioned administration. The work we have accomplished could not have been done by me alone; it was through a team effort of our Town staff and the support and volunteerism of our residents that we have gotten this far. You have heard me say many times, "Move Welaka Forward Together," and that is the only way our community can prosper and better the lives of all of our residents through a collaborative effort from everyone in our community working together. I am humbled

and honored that you have allowed me to be your Mayor during such a critical time in the Town of Welaka. I will continue to work hard every day to live up to the high expectation that you have set forth both my staff and me. With that being said, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Best Regards,
Mayor Watts

From Our Council President

As you read this, Thanksgiving is officially over, and the Holiday Season is in full swing. The frenetic pace of the season is often overwhelming. This year's woes have added to the anxiety felt by many that accompany the season. Whether it be the feeling of not being able to afford the right gifts, the grief of a recent loss, or a sense of isolation, these feelings can be pervasive.

Pondering this, it seems to be a blessing that Thanksgiving comes first, giving us a chance to slow down and reflect on everything we have to be grateful for. But Thanksgiving is hardly over when we are suddenly bombarded with the fact that Christmas is less than a month away! And we have so much to do!

What would happen if we could prolong the Thanksgiving Season? Until the end of the year? How about even longer? What about making Thanksgiving a part of our daily life throughout the year? For myself, pausing daily to reflect on the good (and maybe the not-so-good) in my life brings about a calm that soothes my spirit and mind even at my most stressful times.

As American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude."

Let it be so with us. May the month ahead bring you joy and gratitude.

In Your Service,
Council President Jessica Finch

Town Committees

The Town of Welaka Charter Committee will meet on Dec. 7th and the 21st at 5:00 PM as we continue the process for drafting a new Town Charter. All residents are welcome to come out that evening and join them at Welaka Town Hall 400 4th Ave. Welaka, FL 32193.

The Town of Welaka Citizens Advisory Board will meet on December 10, 2021, at 9:00 AM as they continue to solicit ideas from the community on how we can improve Welaka. Their top priority currently is prioritizing our Town road for repair and resurfacing. All residents are welcome to come out that evening and join them at Welaka Town Hall 400 4th Ave. Welaka, FL 32193.

Vegetation Maintenance of Power Lines

If you have a powerline you are concerned could be affected by vegetation such as tree branches please call one of the two numbers below to report it to your power company.

Florida Power and Light Customers 800-468-8243 Clay Electric(800) 511-5998 Customers

Monthly Town Meetings

All meetings are at Welaka Town Hall

Located at 400 4th Ave. Welaka, Fl. 32193

December 14, 2021

Zoning Board Meeting 5:30 PM

Code Enforcement Meeting 5:45 PM

Town Council Meeting 6:30 PM

All three meetings will be live-streamed on our Town of Welaka Facebook Page and on our YouTube Channel

December Meter Reading

Will be reading water meters on December 15th. If you have any issues with your water or sewer remember the Town Utility Department is available 24 hours a day at (386) 467-8677 or TDD (800) 955-8771. We ask you to please do your part in conserving water.

Garbage Pickup

Garbage and Recycling pick up will be December 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th. Yard debris pick-up will be on December 6th and the 20th. Please remember to call Waste Pro at (386) 328-5445 if you have any issues with your garbage, yard debris or recycling pick up.

Pay Your Water Bill Online

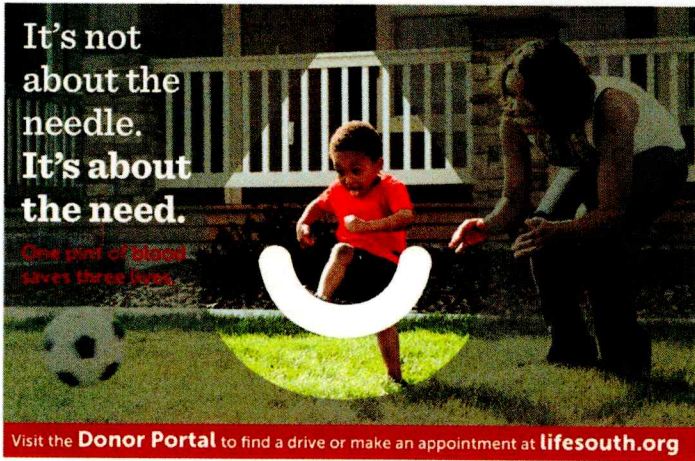
You can now pay your water bill online using our Online Utility Bill pay system. To get started go to www.welakawater.com and create your account. In your account, you can track your monthly water usage and even set up your account for auto-pay so you never have to worry about a late charge again. If you need assistance setting up your account online please call our Utility Department at (386) 467-9800 option 4. You can also drop your payment by Town Hall anytime using our Utility Payment drop box located to the right of the front door of Town Hall.

Recognitions and Proclamations

If you would like to recognize a Town of Welaka resident for dedicated community service to our Town, a local student with exceptional grades, or to nominate a Town resident who is celebrating a landmarked birthday such as turning 100 years old, please contact our Town Clerk Megan Allmond at (386) 467-9800 or by email at townclerk@welaka-fl.gov. We will be happy to recognize them at our next Council Meeting by public recognition.

Calling All Residents

The events committee is looking for volunteers to help with our "Christmas at the River" Festival on December 11th. We need volunteers to assist with lining up those participating in our parade and to helping direct vendors as they set up at Down Town Park. Even if you cannot work all day, that's ok; any volunteerism you can do would be appreciated. To register to volunteer, go to welakachristmas.com or call Courtney Desouza at (904) 554-6458



Give local. Save local.

Welaka Town Hall Blood Drive

Thursday, December 9

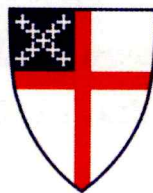
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

1 Donor will win a \$50.00 Hills Hardware Gift Card!!!



All donors will receive a recognition item and a free cholesterol screening. Donors must be 16 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, and show photo I.D. 16-year-olds require written parental permission.

LIFESOUTH
Community Blood Centers



Emmanuel

Episcopal Church
672 3rd Ave (CR 309)

Welaka

Presents



Sarah's Song

An Evening of Song

And a

Praise to the Christ Child

Featuring

Two Harps and a Viola

Sue Carmichael—Sandy Emery — Anne Nasrallah

Free Admission

Wednesday Dec 8th 7:00 PM

An offering
For the renovation
Of Emmanuel's
Historic Church Building
Will be taken



More information: Father Les Singleton 352 208 9582 Les32667@gmail.com



TOWN OF WELAKA GOVERNMENT CONTACT LIST:

You may contact the Mayor and Town Council members by phone through the Town Hall phone system or send an email to their official Town of Welaka accounts.

To book a phone or in-person meeting with the Mayor: www.MayorWatts.com

To report an issue or concern: www.TellTownHall.com

To leave a voicemail message for a Town Council member

Method 1

1. Call the **Town of Welaka Town Hall at 386-467-9800**
2. Press the "Town Hall Extension" number of the person to reach their voicemail

Method 2

1. Call the **Town of Welaka Town Hall at 386-467-9800**
2. When the phone system begins speaking press "7"
3. Press the "Option" number of the Council Member to reach their voicemail

Mayor & Town Council Members

Mayor Jamie Watts

Direct Line: 386-524-4009
(386) 467-9800 Extension: 101
jwatts@welaka-fl.gov

Council President Jessica Finch

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 2)
Town Hall Extension: 200
jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Marianne Milledge

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 3)
Town Hall Extension: 201
mmilledge@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Tonya Long

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)
Town Hall Extension: 202
tonyalong@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kathy Washington

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)
Town Hall Extension: 202
kwashington@welaka-fl.gov

Town Departments

Michael Porath - Police Chief

Direct Line: 386-524-4015
Town Hall Extension: 107
mporath@welaka-fl.gov

Meghan Allmon - Town Clerk

Direct Line: 386-524-4010
Town Hall Extension: 102
townclerk@welaka-fl.gov

Kendrea Welch - Utility Clerk

Direct Line: 386-524-4016
Town Hall Extension: 103
kwelch@welaka-fl.gov

Justin Morris - Building Department

Direct Line: 386-524-4013
Town Hall Extension: 105
building@welaka-fl.gov

DECEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
	6 Recycling Pickup Yard Debris Pick-Up	7 Charter Review Committee Meeting 5:00 PM	8 Sarah's Song and Evening of Singing at Welda Emmanuel Episcopal Church	9 Town Hall Blood Drive 9:00 to 5:00	10 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting 9:00 AM	11 Christmas Parade at Noon then Christmas on the River at Downtown Park
5						
12	13 Trash Pickup & Recycling	14 Zoning Board 5:30 Code Enforc 5:45 Town Council 6:30	15	16	17	18
19	20 Recycling Pickup Yard Debris Pick-Up	21 Charter Review Committee Meeting 5:00 PM	22	23	24	25 Christmas
26	27 Trash Pickup & Recycling	28	29	30	31	1 New Year's Day