



# Welaka Gazette

## September 2022

### From The Mayor's Desk

As we enter the month of September, I wanted to update you on the status of some critical projects and grants in the Town and share with you some plans as we continue to move Welaka forward together. I also want to remind you of some important dates in the coming days.

I want to begin by giving you an overview of where we are with our grants. In the newsletter, you will find a section called "Town of Welaka Grant Update." In that section, I outline 12 key grants and projects that we have either already applied for and received, or we are currently applying for or will apply for very soon. What I am about to share with you is a synopsis of all the projects. I encourage you to read the detailed report, which deals with road paving and other infrastructure in the Town.

In the past 14 months, we have applied for and received \$13.9 Million Dollars in grants, including \$13.3 million Dollars to build a new advanced wastewater treatment plant and \$68,500 to complete strategic planning for the Town's future. Part of that planning will include an opportunity for our residents to share their opinion on how they envision the Town in the future. We know that change is coming and that we cannot stop it; however, we can create a plan that will guide that change in a way that will preserve the Town of Welaka as we have come to know and love. Unfortunately, many Cities and Towns in Florida have not taken that bold step to create a plan for the future, and because of that, their Town has fallen victim to developers and others who do not have a long-term interest in the Town. I promised you, under my watch, that this would not happen to the Town of Welaka. I will continue to work hard with our Town Council to protect the small Town charm we have come to love about Welaka. They say the best way to predict the future is to create the future. Creating this plan and then shaping our Land Development Code and other critical Ordinances around it will help to ensure we maintain control over the future of our Town.

We have also applied for \$8.7 Million Dollars in grants to help improve our wastewater collection system and create a plan for flooding issues in Welaka. I realize you often hear me talk about water and wastewater, and it is because it is critical to the future of our Town. Water is essential to life and treatment, and cleaning our wastewater is vital to our health and safety and to protecting the St. Johns River, a critical part of our community and something we have all come to love about Welaka. Unfortunately, our wastewater collection system, which collects all the sewage in the Town and delivers it to the treatment plant, is just as aged and in poor condition as our plant. This key grant will upgrade the lift stations and replace any damaged sewer pipes reducing the likelihood of wastewater

seeping into the river. It will also expand the Town's service, allowing us to remove approximately 90 homes directly on the St. Johns River from septic and place them onto sewer. This project is critical to protecting our community and our river.

Besides the grants we have already received and or applied for, we also have \$2.5 Million Dollars in grants I plan to apply for in the next 6 to 12 months that will do some significant paving and drainage projects in the Town. All these projects are also laid out in the "Town of Welaka Grant Update" section, so I encourage you to read through it because it has some great information. In total, all the grants come to over \$25 Million Dollars in essential projects. Projects that will not require us to fund them with local taxpayer dollars.

Speaking of local Taxpayer dollars, it is once again budget season in the Town, and we have two important dates I want to make you aware of, so please mark your calendar. The first is September 8th at 5:05 PM, and the second is September 22nd at 5:05 PM, both at the Welaka Town Hall. These are the public hearing dates to discuss the Town budget and set the tax rate in the Town for the coming year. This is important because the tax rate will directly determine what you will pay in property tax in November. I encourage you to attend both meetings and provide your input. Some areas we would like to expand on in the coming year is the addition of either a 3rd full-time Police Officer or two part-time Police Officers. We recently added Officer Todd Bryant to our department, which has worked out great. However, we cannot expect him to work every night and weekend, which is when we need police protection the most. Adding a 3rd full-time Officer or two part-time Officers will take some of the load off of our current Officers. We are also looking to add additional equipment to our Public Works Department, including a small dump truck to assist us with yard debris pickup and a second lawnmower to replace our aging and worn mowers. We have made great strides in updating our Public Works Department equipment, but there is still work to be done if we give them the safe and reliable equipment they need to maintain our Town. We also want to give significant raises to our Town employees to offset the inflation we have witnessed in the last eight months in our country. Our staff works hard 24 hours a day to care for our Town, and we want to ensure we are taking care of them.

Before I close out for the month, I want to retake the opportunity to recognize the Welaka Events Committee for all their hard work putting on fantastic events in Welaka in the past 14 months. Without the hard work of these dedicated residents and Officers, we could not bring you such great events. I also want to remind you of some upcoming events in the Town. On September 17th, from 7-10 PM at Jefferson Smith Park, the Events Committee will be our encore presentation of Jazz in the Park. I encourage you to come out and join us that night for great food and fantastic jazz music. Also, our Spooky Golf Cart Parade and Candy Give Out will take place on Sunday, October 30th; the time and location will be announced in the October newsletter. Finally, our annual Christmas Parade will be on Saturday, December 10th, at 12 noon. More information will also be posted in our October and November newsletters about this event.

As you can see, we continue to have great things happening in Welaka. Everything from the significant improvements to our Town to the great events. I continue to count it an honor and privilege to serve as your Mayor during such an important time in our Town. If there is anything that

our staff or I can do to assist you, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We stand ready to serve you in any way we can.

*Very Best Regards,*

*Jamie D. Watts* MAYOR

## **From The Council President**

As you may have heard, the town of Welaka has recently been awarded a Competitive Florida Partnership Grant by the DEO in the amount of \$46,000.00.

While this amount might seem small in comparison to some of the recent eye popping grants we have recently received, this grant can have a huge impact on the future of our town!

How so? With the assistance of the Northeast Florida Regional Council, this grant will allow us to create visioning workshops to plan for the future of our community. You might say, "If it's not broken, why fix it?" The truth of the matter is, if we do not have a firm idea about how we want our growth to be managed, someone else will choose it for us.

So give it some thought and stay tuned. We'll be counting on you in the near future.

In Your Service,

Jessica Finch  
Welaka Town Council President

### **Need A Meeting With Your Mayor?**

To schedule a meeting with your Mayor, please go to [www.MayorWatts.com](http://www.MayorWatts.com) and select the date and time that works for you.



### ***Do You Have News for the Town of Welaka?*** **PUBLISH IT IN THE WELAKA GAZETTE!**

For more information, please contact the Welaka Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon, at [TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov](mailto:TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov)



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 **Welaka Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon**, at [TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov](mailto:TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov). We will be happy to recognize them at our next Council Meeting by public recognition.



## **Eyeglass Recycling – How You Can Help**

South Putnam Lion Club would like to remind you that you can drop your unused glasses by Welaka Town Hall in the drop-box in the main hallway. Donate glasses and change someone's life. Imagine if you could help a child read, an adult to succeed in their job, or a senior citizen maintaining their independence. Help to provide our community with more opportunities to grow and thrive.



## **Need To Report An Issue or Make A Town Code Violation Complaint?**

Need to report a street or parks issue or make a Codes Enforcement Complaint? Report online at [www.TellTownHall.com](http://www.TellTownHall.com)



## **Helping Hands of Welaka Toy Drive**

Helping Hands of Welaka is collecting toys to give out to the children who attend the Welaka Christmas Parade & Festival in December of this year. If you would like to donate, please contact **Harriet Vanslyke** at **(631) 764 - 2308**



## **Sponsor an Event**

The Events Committee is seeking sponsors as they plan new events for the future. Some of the events include having a fireworks show at one of our events. Like all things, these things cost money. While the town sponsors these events, we do not have it in the budget to do everything we want to do. If you know anyone who would like to sponsor any of our events, please reach out to our Events Committee at [events@welaka-fl.gov](mailto:events@welaka-fl.gov)

## **WELAKA GOLF CART RENEWALS BEGIN OCTOBER 1, 2022**

### **You Must Provide:**

**Valid Driver's License**

**Insurance (with golf cart specifics listed)**

**\$25.00 (Cash, Check or Money Order)**




# FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT AT THE PARK



Showing: **Friday, September 9, 2022**

**Free Hotdogs, Free Popcorn**



Hosted by:  
Town of Welaka Police  
Department  
&  
Friends of Welaka

Jefferson Smith Park,  
1050 Elm Street, Welaka FL 32193

Movie will begin at 7:45pm. Be sure to bring chairs and blankets!  
Please note: No alcohol is permitted in the park.

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Join us at the  
Woman's Club of Welaka  
644 CR309

## Sip 'n' Paint



Saturday, September 10  
2:00-4:00 p.m.  
with C-Gypsea Art

Enjoy an afternoon with friends,  
snacks, creativity and fun!

Donation \$40  
Reserve your canvas!  
Call 904-347-7758


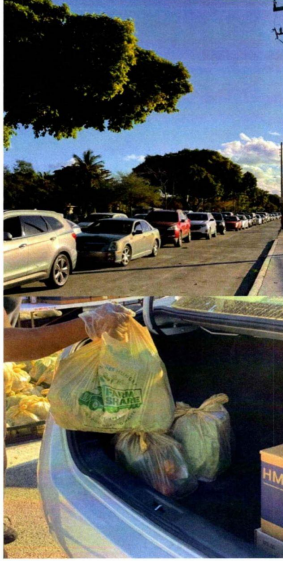
## Puppy Picasso!

Create a one-of-a kind masterpiece  
on canvas with your canine best friend!


Saturday, September 17  
9:00-12:00  
Woman's Club of Welaka  
\$15 donation  
Reservations required\*  
904-347-7758

\*All dogs MUST be on a leash and under owner control at all times

We will also be selling upcycled furniture,  
crafts, and books!  
No reservation required.  
Come join us!

## FARM SHARE FOOD DISTRIBUTION



HELPING HANDS  
WELAKA

SEPTEMBER 16, 2022  
9 AM  
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

WELAKA TOWN HALL  
400 4TH AVE, WELAKA, FL 32193

Food is first come, first served.

DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTION  
Farm Share is an equal opportunity provider

# Town of Welaka Grant Update

## Roads

### 2nd Ave.

To complete engineering, drainage, and paving of 2nd Ave. South St. to Broad

#### Funding Agency

Florida Legislative Appropriation

#### Status

Appropriation requests will be submitted in January 2023, with a presentation to Florida Legislators in March or April 2023.

**Amount** \$856,400.00

### 4th Ave., Orange, Walnut, & Oak

To complete engineering, drainage, and paving of 4th Ave., Orange, Walnut, & Oak

#### Funding Agency

Florida Department of Transportation  
Small County Outreach Grant

#### Status

FDOT will begin accepting grant requests in January 2023

**Amount** \$1.7 Million

### 11th Ave & Shell St.

To complete engineering, drainage, and paving of 11th Ave & Shell St.

#### Funding Agency

FDEP Protecting Florida Together Grant

#### Status

Pending final approval from FDEP

**Amount** \$272,490

### 1st Ave

To complete engineering, drainage, and paving of 1st Ave

#### Funding Agency

FDEP Protecting Florida Together Grant

#### Status

Will require approval of the Town Council after Florida Legislative Appropriation is approved.

**Amount** \$233,563

### Broad St. and 2nd Ave & McClure

To repave the intersection of Broad & 2nd Ave and the entrance to McClure, which are in poor condition.

#### Funding Agency

American Rescue Plan Dollars and Better Place Funds

#### Status

Will require approval of Town Council

**Amount** \$25,000.00

## Water & Wastewater

### Phase 1 Wastewater Treatment Plant

Engineering and construction of a new advanced wastewater treatment plant, operation center, and public works facility

#### Funding Agency

DEO Job Growth Infrastructure Grant

#### Status

Approved and in the planning phase

**Amount** \$3.5 Million

### Phase 1 Wastewater Treatment Plant

To complete the construction phase of a new advanced wastewater treatment plant, operation center, and public works facility

#### Funding Agency

FDEP Protecting Florida Together Grant

#### Status

Approved and in the planning phase

**Amount** \$9.8 Million

### Phase 2 Wastewater Collection

To complete engineering and update to the Towns aging wastewater collection system, update of Sportsman Harbour sewer system, 6 lift stations, and sewer lines.

#### Funding Agency

FDEP Protecting Florida Together Grant

#### Status

Submitted, waiting for FDEP approval

**Amount** \$8.6 Million

### Auto Read Water Meter System

To complete engineering construction, and installation of a complete auto-read water meter system and the full upgrade of lift station 6 on 4th Ave.

#### Funding Agency

DEO Community Development Grant

#### Status

Preliminary DEO Approval, waiting for final approval

**Amount** \$600,000

## Economic Development & Resilience

### Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

To update the Town of Welaka's Comprehensive Land Use Plan to ensure we are planning for the future of Welaka.

#### Funding Agency

DEO Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant

#### Status

Completed

**Amount** \$22,500

### Town Vision & Strategic Planning

To fund the creation of a strategic plan for fostering economic development in the Town of Welaka.

#### Funding Agency

DEO Competitive Florida Partnership Grant

#### Status

Approved, planning to commence in the next 60 to 90 days.

**Amount** \$46,000

### Town Wide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Study and Plan

To complete a study of the effects of flooding and sea level rise in Welaka, including Sportsman Harbour, CR308B, and Beecher's Point. This study will be used to secure grants to fund projects to deal with flooding and protect critical assets of the Town.

#### Funding Agency

FDEP Protection Resilient Florida Grant

#### Status

Submitted, waiting for FDEP approval

**Amount** \$116,400

# TOWN OF WELAKA CONTACT LIST

## Welaka Police Department

### **Michael Porath - Police Chief**

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

## Welaka Municipal Services

### **Meghan Allmon - Town Clerk**

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

## Welaka Utility Department

### **Kendrea Welch - Utility Clerk**

Direct Line: (386) 524-4016  
Town Hall Extension: 103  
**utility@welaka-fl.gov**

## Welaka Building Department

### **Justin Morris - Building Inspector**

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

**Waste Pro:** (386) 328-5445

## Mayor's Office

### **Mayor Jamie Watts**

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

## Welaka Town Council

### **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 5)  
Town Hall Extension: 203  
**kwashington@welaka-fl.gov**



**September 17th, 7-10 PM at Jefferson Smith Park**

# SEPTEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1 American Chess Day 	2	3
4 National Wildlife Day 	5 Labor Day (Town Hall Closed) 	6 Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	7 National Salami Day 	8	9 Community Advisory Council Meeting 9:00 AM Welaka Town Hall  Family Movie Night Jefferson Smith Park 7:45 PM	10 Sip 'n' Paint Woman's Club Painting 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
11	12 Trash & Recycling Pickup	13 Welaka Town Council Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	14	15 Water Meter-Reading Day  Zoning Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	16 Farm Share Food Distribution Truck Welaka Town Hall Pavilion 9:00 AM	17 Puppy Picasso Woman's Club Painting 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
18	19 Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	20 National Pepperoni Pizza Day 	21	22 World Rhino Day 	23	24
25 National Lobster Day 	26 Trash & Recycling Pickup	27 Code Enforcement Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	28	29	30 National Love People Day 	1 Welaka - Annual Golf Cart Renewals -\$25 (Cash/Ck/MO) -Driver's License -Insurance