

2022-2023

Annual Report



City of Wauchula



Vision

The City of Wauchula is known as a vibrant, sustainable, safe, economic driver in our region with high engagement of our community, citizens, and City team.

Mission

The City of Wauchula is committed to providing exceptional service, maintaining a safe and inviting environment for a united community.

Values

The City of Wauchula values:

Integrity;

Servant-leadership;

Engagement;

Excellence.

From the

City Manager

Honorable Mayor, City Commissioners and Residents of the City of Wauchula,

I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending September 2023. As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that Wauchula has achieved significant milestones and progress in various areas that contribute to the well-being of our community.

We kicked off Fiscal Year 22-23 in recovery mode from Hurricane Ian. Our team responded safely and efficiently clearing right of ways, restoring utilities, repairing major washouts of roadways and rehabilitating city facilities that suffered flood & wind damage. We continue to work through the logistics of both FEMA and insurance reimbursements to this day.

We were successful in our efforts to secure over \$14,000,000 in funding appropriations from the State of Florida during the 2023 legislative session. At a local level, the Economic Development Authority also supported our requests for funding, resulting in \$900,000 in grant funds. These external funding sources help to stretch our dollars and keep projects moving forward. Projects are not possible without proper planning, design and funding to support them. Our team has been busy the past year making sure that those needs are met by completing items such as:

- Secured new Purchase Power Agreement with Florida Power & Light for bulk power supply
- Secured Master Consulting Agreements for civil, utility & stormwater engineering services
- Secured Master Consulting Agreement for aviation engineering services
- Completed a water/wastewater rate study and implemented recommendations
- Began an electric rate study

All of this and more happened without skipping a beat during and after significant staff changes, i.e. a new City Manager, Deputy City Manager, City Clerk, Finance Director, Chief of Police and Assistant Chief of Police. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our city staff who work hard for our community. They exhibit our values of Integrity, Servant Leadership, Excellence and Engagement in their daily actions. It is an honor to serve the City of Wauchula alongside such amazing people.

As we look ahead, the Wauchula community can anticipate continued development and enhancement to our services. We remain committed to providing exceptional service, maintaining a safe and inviting environment for a united community. I know we will continue to build on our achievements and I am excited for our future!

Sincerely,
Olivia Minshew

City Council



District Seat 3
Keith Nadaskay, Jr., Mayor



District Seat 1
Neda Cobb, Mayor Pro-Tem



District Seat 2
Russell Smith



District Seat 4
Sherri Albritton



District Seat 5
Gary Smith





Executive Team



Olivia Minshew
City Manager



John Eason
Deputy City Manager



Brandon Ball
Chief of Police



Martha Felix
Finance Director



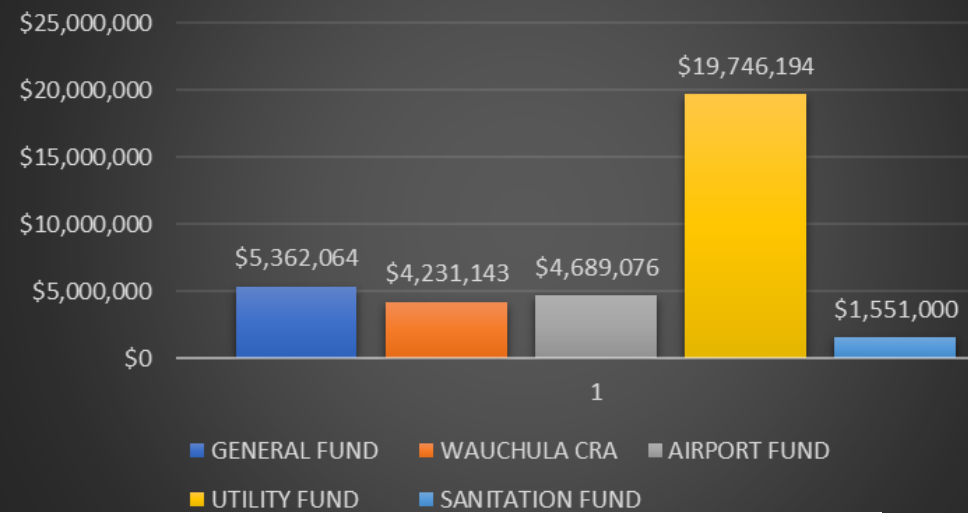
Stephanie Camacho
City Clerk

FINANCE

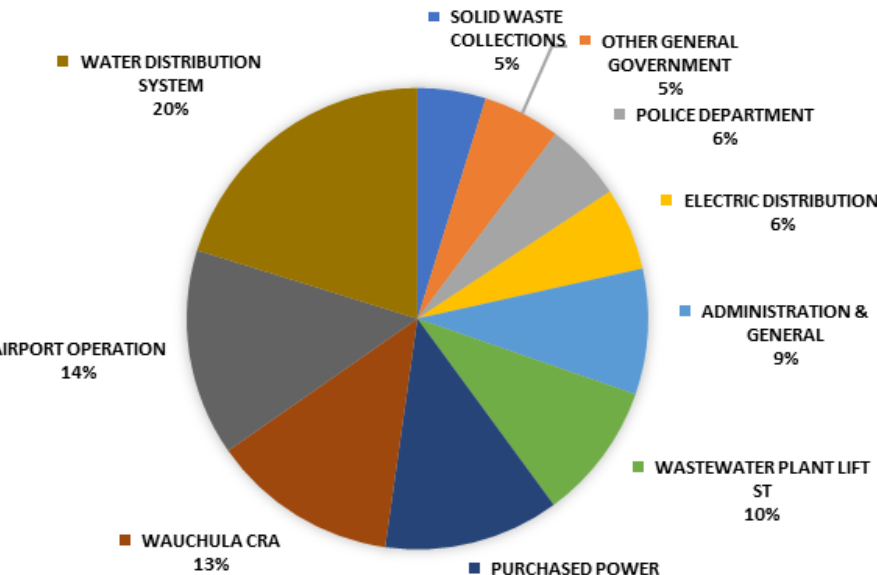


The City of Wauchula Finance Department is committed to providing the highest levels of financial services to the public and user departments. This includes insuring that proper controls and procedures are in place to manage and protect the public's resources. We regularly evaluate and balance our service levels, customer needs, efficiency and available resources. The City Finance Director plans, organizes, provides administrative direction and oversight for, and participates in, all financial and related functions and activities, which includes investments, financial transaction processing, record keeping and reporting, payroll, utility billing, and information system technology; functions as the Chief Financial Officer for the City; coordinates the production and the administration of the City's budget; provides expert professional assistance to City management staff in areas of expertise; fosters cooperative working relationships with regulatory agencies.

BUDGET BY FUND



TOP 10 DEPARTMENTS



The Finance Director also oversees, directs and participates in all activities of the Finance Department, including the treasury and budget functions. The work involves both the oversight of functions and activities and performance of many of the reporting, reconciliation and other day-to-day functions. Responsibilities include coordinating the activities of the department with those of other elected and appointed officials and managing and accomplishing the complex and varied functions of the department. The incumbent is accountable for accomplishing departmental planning and operational goals and objectives and for furthering City goals and objectives within general policy guidelines.

HUMAN RESOURCES



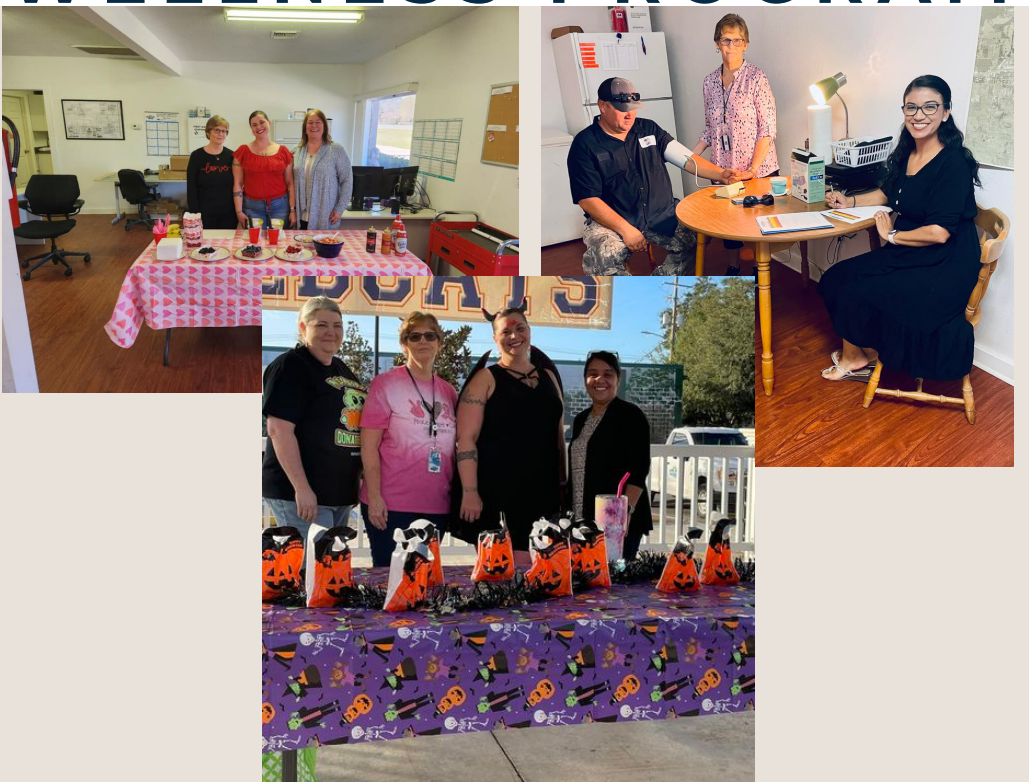
The Human Resources (HR) Department has made it their goal to foster a healthy, prosperous work environment that is always improving. To achieve this, the following practices have been put in place:

- Successfully completed another open enrollment along with the transition of Albritton Ins. to Acentria Insurance.
- Ensuring training is up-to-date, accessible, relatable, and relevant to the employees.
- Consolidating resources and cross-training wherever needed.
- Leading and assisting with employee events that improve employee morale and create memorable team building opportunities.

16 NEW EMPLOYEES	72 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES	40+ HOURS OF TRAININGS	35 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION FORMS
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EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Wellness program was a great success. The participation throughout the year was great in all the different events we held. Our average number of participants were between 45-55 employees in each event. The employees participated in the Hunger Drive, SMM 5K, Bio Screen, and 6 other wellness events. Our number 1 goal is to encourage healthy living. We are looking forward to another great year. We hosted a weight loss challenge where collectively employees lost 309.20 pounds and 40 employees maintained their weight.

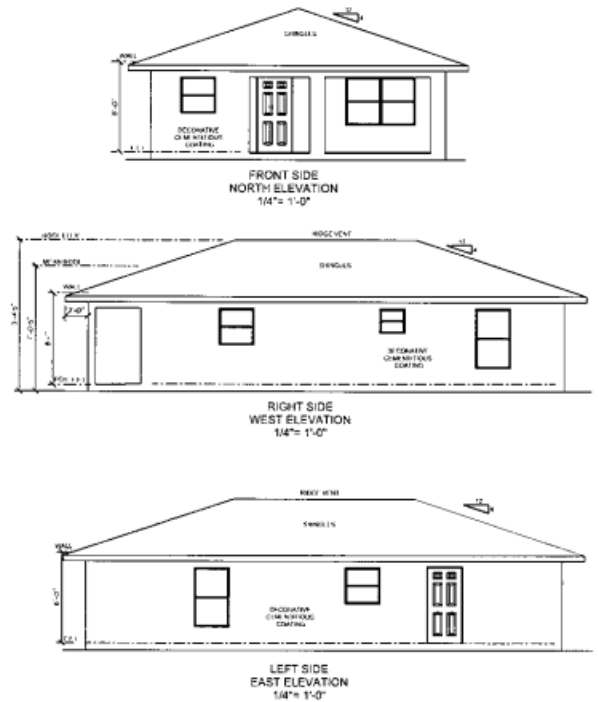
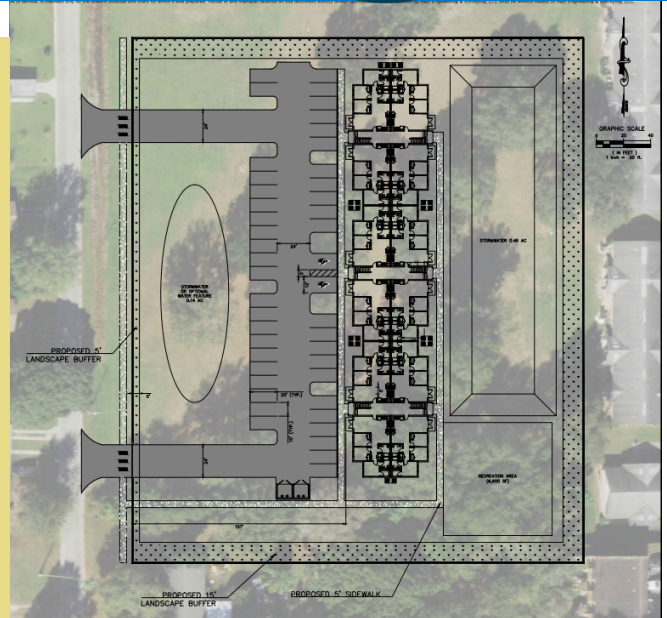


PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The Planning & Zoning Board heard the following requests over the past year:

- Site Development Plan review of the Diana Avenue Apartment project
- Rezone of Seminole Park from Public/Semi-Public to R-2 to accommodate for in-fill housing homes
- ULDC Text Amendment relating to affordable housing regulations
- Approved a Special Exception for 209 W Orange Street (Allowing a residential use in a commercial zoning district)
- Future Land Use Map Amendment for 219 S 10th Avenue changing the future land use designation from Low Density Residential to Public/Semi-Public
- Rezone for 219 S 10th Avenue changing the zoning designation from Public/Semi-Public to Residential (R-1)
- Annual update to the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvement Element (CIE)
- ULDC text amendment amending the land use regulations for Public/Private Schools
- Recommended approval of the updated Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, related comprehensive plan amendments and 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan
- Emergency ordinance amending Section 2.03.08 of the Unified Land Development Code allowing a temporary structure permit extension during a state of emergency



The staff of the Community Development Department processed the following permits:

401

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

14

SINGLE FAMILY HOME PERMITS

8

SIGN PERMITS

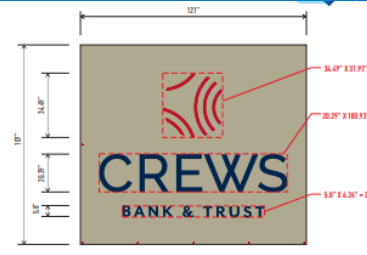
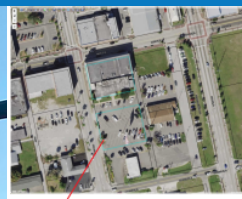
11

FENCE PERMITS

15

RIGHT-OF-WAY PERMITS

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The Historic Preservation Board reviewed and approved eleven applications for Certificate of Appropriateness. Most notable were the updated R Riveter paint colors and the Crews Bank signage updates. The Historic Preservation Board strives to protect the characteristics of the Historic Commercial Zoning District that reflects the City's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

WITHIN THE 2022-2023 YEAR, CODE ENFORCEMENT COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING:

20
COURTESY
NOTICES

240
REVIEWED VACANT
PROPERTIES TO
IMPROVE

144
TOTAL CODE
VIOLATIONS

12
MINIMUM MAINTENANCE
VIOLATION CASES



BEFORE

01/11/2017

AFTER

10/10/2022

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT



The purchasing department ensures the City's purchasing policy is followed as it facilitates all the necessary purchases for the City, everything from office & operating supplies to trucks and equipment, and everything in between. The centralized purchasing process ensures an efficient means to keep the City fiscally responsible and avoid waste.

We continue to look for more efficient/better ways to maintain & track inventory, equipment & facilities maintenance. The work order system allows for data driven purchasing decisions when it comes to facility repairs/maintenance and equipment and truck replacements.

The fleet replacement program and capital improvement plan allows for a planned approach to larger capital purchases rather than a reactionary approach.



For example, this year the City was able to purchase an additional dumpster truck while retaining the existing dumpster truck as a backup. This has been a much-needed addition to ensure a viable plan when the inevitable breakdown occurs. Other notable capital purchases in this area this year were two fleet trucks, three facility air condition units, and a new lawn mower.

WAUCHULA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT



City Staff manages the day-to-day operations of the airport and oversees the planning and grant funded projects at the airport. Projects including a Taxiway Resurface, Lighting & Marking project, a Runway Extension & Fuel Farm project, a Pilot Lounge Rehab & T-Hangar Construction project, are currently underway or soon to be. Currently there is \$11.8 million in active grant projects at the airport. Our small general aviation airport, "In the middle of nowhere," had over 22,000 operations each of the last two years. Wauchula Municipal Airport(WMA)t hosts the annual Bensen Days Gyro plane/Gyro copter event.It is one of the two largest such events in the world. WMA has hosted this event now for 50 years. There are a number of flight schools from both east and west coasts that utilize our airport for flight training. Several paramotor schools are held on-site each year as well. WMA is also home to Harvest Aviation, a Non-Profit mission organization that fly supplies monthly to Belize and Honduras.



One example of a recently completed project at the airport is the new AWOS II installation.

The Automated Weather Observing System provides continuous and real-time weather conditions at the airport by measuring meteorological parameters, reduces and analyzes the data via computer, and broadcasts weather reports which can be received by aircraft operation up to 10,000 feet AGL (Above Ground Level) and 25 nautical miles from the AWOS.





POLICE DEPARTMENT

There has been significant personnel movement within Wauchula Police Department. With the promotion of our previous Chief John Eason to Deputy City Manager along with a couple of retirements, WPD has promoted members to the positions of Chief, Assistant Chief, Lieutenant, Sergeant, Detective Sgt, and Detective and hired several new officers. All promotions were awarded to highly qualified and experienced members of WPD. This is a testament to the quality of the members within WPD. Brandon Ball was the last member of the department to be hired into a supervisory role from outside the department. Our goal is to never hire an external candidate for a promotional opportunity within the department. We pride ourselves on succession planning and the development of talent within the ranks of the Wauchula Police Department, exemplifying our core tenants of Value, Integrity, & Pride.



Even with all the adjustments the Police Department has not been slowing down on their desire to provide a safe and secure environment for their community.

- Assistant Chief Tom Fort is currently attending the prestigious and highly regarded FBI National Academy. A 10-week course in Quantico, Va. designed for senior law enforcement executives. The selection process for attending this training is HIGHLY competitive and Assistant Chief Fort's selection and attendance is a REALLY big deal. Wauchula Police Department last had a member attend this training in 2009. Assistant Chief Fort's training at the FBI-NA also earns him credit through the University of Virginia. Those credits will transfer into UCF where he is currently pursuing a Master's Degree and scheduled to graduate in late 2024.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Successfully replaced the weapons our officers carry every day. We rolled out modern handguns with optics. We are the first agency in the Heartland to transition to optics on handguns. Our yearly proficiency scores went through the roof. Officers completed over 30 hours of advanced transition training and are outfitted with new handguns, optics, weapon mounted lights, and new holsters. This transition resulted in our officers reducing the overall weight, length, and footprint of the weapon and holster while simultaneously increasing ammunition capacity. We are about to assist the Hardee County Sheriffs Office who is following our lead.
- Successfully replaced the long-guns (rifles) our officers carry. The old weapons were literally Vietnam era military surplus rifles. We replaced the weapons with a modern version which is shorter and lighter and is outfitted with modern optics and lighting systems.
- Successfully implemented ALPR technology (Automated License Plate Readers) within the City of Wauchula. This technology has been instrumental in traffic enforcement by identifying missing persons, wanted persons, stolen vehicles, etc.
- WPD continues to “freshen up” the appearance of WPD equipment, uniforms, and vehicles. We rolled out a community designed uniform patch our officers wear every day. We also implemented new graphics on police vehicles that have garnered significant positive comments from staff and community members. We will continue to outfit new vehicles as they come in each year.



- WPD participated in a community engagement challenge that encouraged members of the department and members of our community to take selfies with one another to foster and develop the relationship with those we serve. The winners from the community and from the WPD were awarded steak dinners cooked by the Chief. It turned in to a department wide dinner with many members of our community coming together to have a meal with one another. This event garnered a ton of positivity and was a big hit on our social media page (Facebook).

CITY CLERK



The City Clerk is responsible for preparing agendas and attending City Commission workshops and meetings, as well as meetings for all boards and committees of the City. As the custodian of the official records of the City of Wauchula, the City Clerk records and maintains all proceedings of these meetings, as well as prepares minutes for each. The Clerk's Office also facilitates bid openings for advertised projects and services, prepares legal notices for publishing, administers the City oath to all new employees, and serves as an internal auditor, reporting findings to the City Commission as needed.



In 2022, our community was threatened by another major hurricane. The Clerk's Office ensured that the records of the City were well protected, that notices of emergency meetings and special meetings were published in accordance with Florida Statutes and minutes were readily available.

During this fiscal year, the City Clerk's Office completed an annual destruction of approximately 2,400 pounds of paper records that met retention and submitted the annual compliance statement to the State of Florida as required by Florida Statutes. The City Clerk continued to oversee all public records requests to ensure compliance with Florida Statutes by providing all records in a timely manner.

12

ADOPTED ORDINANCES

2

PROCLAMATIONS

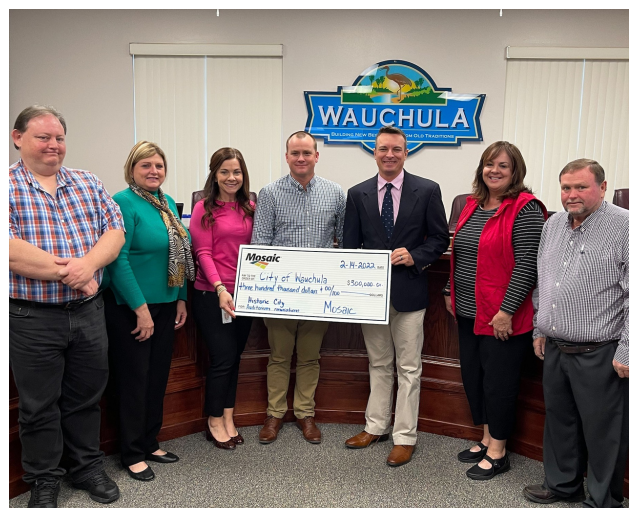
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APPROVED RESOLUTIONS

43

EXECUTED CONTRACTS/ AGREEMENTS FOR FILING

In March 2023, the City welcomed new City Clerk, Stephanie Camacho to the team. Since coming aboard, Stephanie has joined the local Kiwanis club and gained membership with the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), as well as the Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC). Stephanie will attend annual training conferences to continue her education to stay current on Florida laws pertaining her responsibilities as City Clerk. This fall, she will complete the first of a 3-year course to becoming a State Certified Municipal Clerk. Stephanie is excited for the opportunity to serve the community in this role.



COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



The Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency was established in 1997 to revitalize and restore Wauchula as a vibrant place to live and work.

PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE II- ONGOING
PROJECT COST: \$598,401.40
PROJECT ELEMENTS: PAVILION, RESTROOMS, OFFICE/KIOSK, CANOE STORAGE



PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE III COMPLETED
PROJECT COST: \$172,497
GRANTS: \$142,757 EDA
PROJECT ELEMENTS: PLAYGROUND, ADA AMENITIES, BENCHES, FENCE



Other Projects

- Historic Auditorium renovations
- Farr Field ongoing renovations
- Ongoing US 17 & Main Street Parking Lot

Grants

- Economic Development Agency
- FDEP Recreation Trails
- FDEP Florida Recreation and Development Assistance
- Mosaic
- Division of Historical Preservation
- State appropriations

IN-FILL HOUSING
PROJECT COST: \$568,245.00



ROAD MAINTENANCE DIVISION



The mission of the Streets and Roads Maintenance Division is to provide for a safe and well-maintained streets and roads system. With a new fiscal year upon us, the Streets & Maintenance Department offers you a look back at some accomplishments in 2023.

LOUISIANA STREET SIDEWALK PROJECT

This sidewalk begins at the entry of our new subdivision Hidden Creek and connects to Florida Avenue. It consists of:

- *Approximately 7,500 ft of new sidewalk
- *Approximately 160 Yards of Concrete
- *800 ft of safety railing (Ditch Area)

NEW STREET SIGNS DESIGN

A large percentage of the city's street signs were worn & faded.

We knew it was time to address this issue, but while we were at it, why not change things up a bit and go with a different design, which includes our city logo, like most of us have seen in some other cities.

This project takes careful planning to be assured that all street names & block numbers are correct, before ordering.

To date, we have installed new signs, including updated stop signs & reflectors, to the entire Southeastern side of the city, and currently in the process of distributing to the Northeast.



STREET LIGHTS RESTORATION IN BRIARWOOD

The street lights in Briarwood subdivision are identical to those on East & West Main St. While their antique style is adored by many, age was beginning to show & we addressed some needs:

- *Pressure washed
- *Removed all rust
- *Applied new paint
- *Ordered new globes & bulbs

General maintenance & repairs at all City facilities which include but are not limited to roofing repairs, plumbing, carpentry, landscaping, and pressure washing:

- *City Hall
- *Historic City Hall
- *Garden Club
- *Nu-Hope
- *Old PD/Send Me Missions
- *Farr Field
- *Crews Park
- *Heritage Park
- *Oak St Park
- *Seminole Park
- *Peace River Park
- *Train Depot
- *City Shop, Warehouse, And Break Room
- *Power Plant
- *Airport
- *Cemetery

PARKS AND RECREATION



The City of Wauchula Parks and Recreation Division is as diverse as the community it serves. Services provided range from weekly playground maintenance and inspections to manicured lawn and garden care as well as washroom maintenance, irrigation and tree management, and taking care of the City Cemetery.

In addition to parks and green spaces, Wauchula staff maintains over 2 miles of trails providing over 10,000 feet of developed walkways throughout Peace River Park.



6

PARKS
MAINTAINED

4

PLAYGROUNDS

1

TENNIS COURT/
PICKELBALL COURT

WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT



Along with their day-to-day duties of caring for our water and sewer system, the crews have completed 5 manhole rehabilitation projects this year. Manhole rehabilitation is the process of reinforcing and restoring an aging manhole after years of wear and tear to avoid full replacement. Rehabilitation is essential for manhole maintenance to revitalize existing structures and steer clear of disaster down the line.

Damaged manholes are susceptible to inflow and infiltration which stem from excess ground or stormwater seeping through cracks or holes in the manhole structure. Structural collapse is a worst-case scenario but highly possible if manhole maintenance is neglected.

67

3/4" RESIDENTIAL
WATER METERS
UPGRADED

3

1 1/2" COMMERCIAL
WATER METERS
UPGRADED

38.16

MILES OF
SEWER LINES

36.74

MILES OF DRINKING
WATER LINES

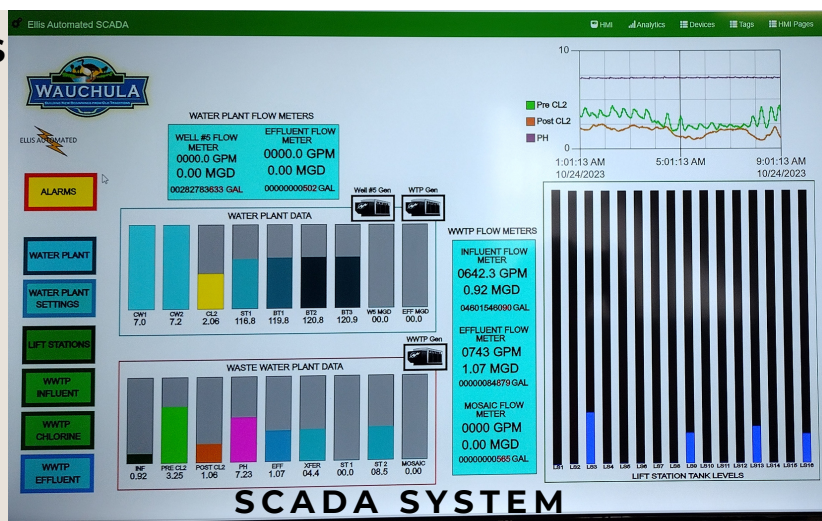
WATER/WASTEWATER DIVISION



The City staff for the plants includes five dual certified operators. They are certified in both water and wastewater and rotate between the two plants. The city also has a laboratory technician that is capable of running samples for both water and wastewater. The plant is capable of supplying over 4 million gallons of water per day. The water is aerated, disinfected and also injected with an antiscalant that helps prevent corrosion in the pipes of the distribution system. The water storage capacity is 800000 gallons. The City's water and wastewater plants have onsite power generation that allows them to continue operating even in the event of a power outage. There is also a SCADA system that allows the operators to monitor and control plant equipment through text messaging without having to be on-site.

WASTEWATER AND LIFT STATIONS

- Expanded SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) System (Allows for operators to check and control the plant remotely. Also alarms operators should there be a problem.)
- Replaced plant reuse flow meter (records how much water we send to Mosaic)
- Installed new fencing at WWTP
- Purchased 12 new portable Generators
- Rehabbed lift stations
- Sludge Site Inspection (in compliance)
- Began construction on new digester (a part of treatment at the WWTP)
- Began renewal process for WWTP 10-year permit



SCADA SYSTEM

WATER PLANT

- Small tower repairs: new overflow pipe
- Entered into a Mutual Aid Agreement with FL Rural water Association (Allows for us to receive help from other municipalities during a natural disaster. Also allows us to help others)
- Astera Leak Detection (satellite imaging and manual leak location)
- Painted floors of reverse osmosis and lab
- Rebuilt Well # 1 Motor
- Rehabbed bearings on Well #2
- WTP Sanitary Survey (in compliance)
- Upgrading main line down Orange St.
- Ran new main line down Palmetto St.
- Sampled lead and copper for schools and child care facilities (New Rule passed down from Department of Environmental Protection. We are one year ahead of schedule.)



NEW PORTABLE GENERATORS

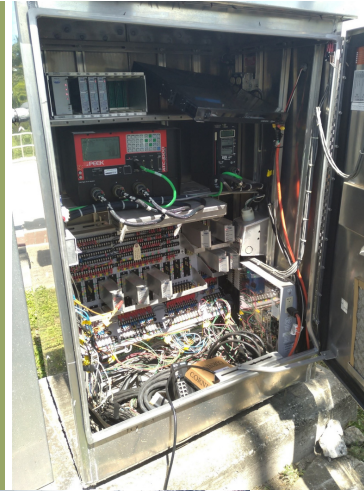
ELECTRICAL DIVISION



The City of Wauchula owns and operates a non-generating municipal electric utility system and currently receives its wholesale power from Florida Power & Light (FPL). The city reports all outages to Florida Municipal Power Agency for tracking. Our mission is to serve our customers with reliable, quality power and to provide service in a prompt courteous manner at competitive rates. The electric crew has been busy this past year with many new projects as well as maintaining our system and the day-to-day duties.

FDOT EQUIPMENT MAINTAINED

- Maintain 12 Traffic Signal Lights Wauchula/Bowling Green/Zolfo Springs/Weekly inspections
- Hwy 17 Lighting 142 Lights
- 5 Flashing School Zone Lights
- Replaced 2ea, Traffic Signal Cabinet damaged in vehicle accidents
- 6 traffic loops replaced
- Replaced 2ea. Hwy 17 Lights damaged by vehicle accidents



SAFETY

- Truck dielectric Testing/inspection (annually)
- Rubber hose/blanket testing (annually)
- Pole top rescue/bucket truck rescue
- Monthly safety meeting
- PRM Training



SUBSTATION

- Weekly maintenance & inspection/Amp reading and check relays
- Quarterly herbicide
- Installed SCADA
- Repaired SF6 gas leak on A SIDE
- Replaced battery bank

PRIMARY LINES REPLACED/INSTALLED

- Removed three phase primary crossing HWY 17 @ Georgia St. / Replaced with 3 phase line on 7th Ave
- Removed 3 phase primary between E. Main and Green St
- Installed 3 reclosures at 4th Ave and E Main
- Rural Line reconductor project

49

POLES REPLACED

21

CROSS ARMS REPLACED

24

TRANSFORMERS PUT IN SERVICE/REPLACED

CITY OF WAUCHULA

126 South 7th Avenue,
Wauchula, FL
www.CityofWauchula.gov

 CITY OF WAUCHULA - GOVERNMENT

