

# Town Manager Report - December 2020

Since the Executive Order has been lifted the Town Council has chosen to continue with hybrid meetings, due to fact, the Town Council chamber room has limited seating for the public to follow CDC guidelines and social distance themselves. The Town Council and essential staff are required to attend all meetings in person and having a hybrid meeting will allow all residents to participate, if they choose to, and this type of meeting would not limit public attendance.

In the first week of December the construction bids for the Storm water project were opened and a contractor was chosen. The documentation of the process has been sent to the state for approval to move forward. We should have an answer in January to proceed.

The Town Election took place at the Town Hall as scheduled on Tuesday, December 8, 2020. The Town was pleased with the turnout of voters and Incumbent Paul Sabin was sworn in for another four year term.

The Town officially became a Tree City this month and a plaque was sent to the Town Hall. It will be placed in the front office as soon as the renovations are completed. In addition, there will be two signs posted at each end of the Town on State Road 16 stating Penney Farms is a Tree City.

Construction on the new Pickle Ball Court began this month and is progressing nicely. Trees were removed and the slab has been poured. The Town has been keeping the area cleaned up while the project is being worked on. The court should be completed in February.

The renovation of the Town's historic museum at Town Hall has begun. You will notice a different front entrance. The old roll up doors have been removed and new windows and entrance door has been installed. The front side has even been painted to match the rest of the Town Hall.

In December, all of the sidewalk repairs that were identified throughout town have been completed. This was an item on the capital projects list chosen to complete this year. Now residents can see where some of their tax money is being used.

I have attended all of the scheduled monthly meetings for this month.

*\*This is the last Town Manager report for 2020.*

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2020 YEAR IN REVIEW – What an interesting year it has been.

2020 began with the Town, under the direction and assistance of Dyana Stewart with the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) implemented a water utility revenue plan. This will take the place of the rate study the Town does every two years. This process will ensure the Town's Water Utility is operating financially sound and is prepared to maintain its future infrastructure efficiently.

Also, in January 2020 the Town's water tower was cleaned out and the floats were repaired inside of the water tank. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) cleaned out all of the ditches and storm water drains along State Road 16 throughout the Town limits.

In February, the Town's well meters and sewer meter were calibrated, which is done annually. Also, the tennis courts were professionally cleaned in this month.

All Town meetings were cancelled for the month of March, due to the new restrictions of COVID-19.

In April, all Town meetings became virtual meetings and all Town business was conducted at Town Hall by appointment only, during the normal operating hours. Also, in this month, all of the Town's backflow preventers were inspected and no repairs were needed.

In May, after many months being shorthanded, Josh Young, a new public works technician was hired, Alex Burney retired and Tyler Parks was hired. The clean out of Passive Park began this month and all of the jagged sidewalks were grinded down to avoid any trip hazards. The ADA Restrooms and Climate Controlled Storage room renovations were started, at the Town Hall. In addition to their normal duties and all the renovations, the front office staff was facilitating the Annual Audit, which was being conducted electronically this year and all documentation had to be scanned to the auditor. Also, all of the Town easements were cleaned out and mowed throughout the town limits.

In June, the Town had passed its Annual Audit with flying colors and no findings. The office staff began budget preparation in addition to all the normal duties.

In July, the approved double gate at the water tower was installed. Josh Young updated the Town's Diamond Maps Program with the entire electric grid, including all light poles, all sidewalks and curbs. He also installed new red reflectors on every stop sign located within the Town. The front office staff was primarily focused on the next fiscal year's budget to be discussed at the end of this month.

August consisted of the front office doing research on the ownership of the streets located within the town limits and a definite understanding of which roads are open and closed. This verified information

will help with future infrastructure grants and improvements. The primary election was held at the Town Hall and the town had another great turnout.

In September, the Town received the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) Award for Small Public Water System of the Year, for the entire State of Florida. The Clay today newspaper had an article on the Town receiving this award too. The Climate Controlled Storage Room was completed this month and turned out great. Wendy Reynolds, the Town's long time water administrator left her position. This was a big loss.

In October, the Town Hall ADA restrooms were finally completed. In addition to their normal duties, the public works and front office employees spent days sorting and moving things out of the fire station to prepare for the museum renovation. The Town had another public works technician leave unexpectedly, so the town staff was down by two more people.

In November, after the proper advertising and noticing, the Town hired two new employees to fill the vacancies. The Governor's Executive order for virtual meetings was lifted at the end of October, and the Town Council choose to conduct hybrid meetings to limit in-person contact, but accommodate anyone who would like to attend. The National Election took place this month and the front office staff had to prepare for the Town Council election to take place in December, for three Town Council seats coming to the end of their term. The new Pickle Ball Court was being discussed and designed this month.

I have already discussed December 2020 earlier in this report. I can say that 2020 was a different kind of year, primarily due to meeting the challenges of a global pandemic and deal with many renovation projects at one time. All of the items completed this year were due to a dedicated staff and I believe the Town now has a great team working for the residents of the Town of Penney Farms.

In the 2021 New Year, the Town Hall will be focusing finishing all renovation projects. The Town will also continue the processes and finish the storm water project repairs that are being funded by the CDBG grant. This project will solve the flooding problems on Poling Blvd. and other areas of the Town. With such a small staff and after so many employee changes, I will work with the entire Town staff and focus on training and cross training all of the employees to perform their duties.

The Town will continue to search for grants and fine tune its policies and procedures already in place. I look forward to COVID-19 getting under control and hopefully everyday activities can return to normal. I am looking forward to another productive year in service to the Town of Penney Farms.

BY: David Cooper  
Town Manager