

Town Manager Report - December 2023

This month, Josh Young our Water Utility Administrator also assumed the position of the Town's Water Operator. In addition to all water billing issues, he will be responsible for the Town's water samples and reporting each month. This will save the Town money on using an outside vendor for these services. Thank you Josh for stepping up your dedication to the Town.

The Town's public works employees assisted in putting up the Town's annual Christmas banners for the season. In addition, they helped facilitate the Town's Annual Christmas Parade and Luncheon, which was a success. The Clay County Sheriff's department turned out in force with Sheriff Michelle Cook and we sure appreciate them for their continued service and community involvement.

The Town received a \$100,000.00 grant from Resilient Florida for the engineering of storm water issues within the town limits, which will be required. This will allow the Town to submit issues and not pay for the engineering costs. Thank you to the Town Clerk; Josh Young; and Andrews Greene with Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) for applying for this grant.

There was a water line break near the Penney Retirement Community's maintenance department in the parking lot which was repaired.

I have attended all of the Town's required meetings for this month.

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW –

This year began with meeting with Clay County and the Clay County Transportation Board (CTT) to ensure that more residents who need transportation are services in Clay County. Penney Farms is currently services by the CCT by the green line which has routes available daily for nominal fees. There have been no requests at this time by town residents to add any services.

A major power failure at the Master Lift Pump Station was restored by Florida Power & Light (FPL). Pump #2 was pulled out and rebuilt.

One of the pumps located on Etheleen Court had to be pulled and cleaned out because rags were tangled in it.

The Clay County Sheriff's office is now connected with all of the town's cameras. The Town has put up cameras in various areas of town to help with some negative behavior issues that were happening. The cameras have helped in a big way. Residents are still encouraged to call the non-emergency Sheriff's number (904) 264-6512, if they see anything unusual or suspicious.

Since February 2023, the Town Hall has the Community information television up and running inside the front door of the Town Hall. This tv will be showing the Town of Penney Farms' information and upcoming events to include the Town's Historical Society; the J. C. Penney Scenic Highway; and the

Penney Retirement Community' public events. In addition, this tv will showcase and be rotating all the other incorporated local municipalities' information, such as, Orange Park, Green Cove Springs, and Keystone Heights. Thank you to our Administrative Assistant, Megan Trexler for the beautiful submissions she has designed for the Town.

The Town's tennis courts were pressure washed and cleaned in February and are being done again now. The tennis courts will be re-striped soon with Pickle Ball lines to accommodate the interest of many players.

The public works employees trimmed all of the palm trees on Poling Blvd last February and are schedule to trim them again soon. They also trimmed trees on Caroline Blvd; Booker Avenue; and at the Playground Park.

The Town was awarded the \$600,000.00 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the State for the old water line replacement project. The Grant administrator, Andy Easton & Associates will be representing the town for this project. This project will begin this spring and I will keep the residents aware of the schedule.

The Town Hall was upgraded with vertical blind in the back hallway and Town Manager's office to match the rest of the building.

The public works employees spent a couple of weeks in March 2023 repairing a storm water drain located on Morton Street, between Poling Blvd. and Ott Avenue. The staff put in a whole new 4" line and this has alleviated the flooding problem in this area.

The Town has completed the annually required Water and Sewer Revenue Plan in association with FRWA in March.

The guard rails at the corner of State Road 16 and Wilbank Avenue have been replaced and repaired, due to safety concerns.

The Town has passed all its quarterly Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) inspections for State Road 16. FDOT will be continuing to trim and maintain the canopy from one end of town to the other. They began in April and are anticipated to finish in 2024 sometime.

The Town Hall hosted a Meet-N-Greet with Congressman Aaron Bean and the Town wishes to thank those residents who took the time to come and see our Congressman.

In May the Town had its annual audit performed and again passed for the 9th time without any findings. The front office needs to be commended for its hard work and dedication in making this happen year after year.

The Town received a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FRDAP) for \$50,000.00 and renovated the Playground Park with a new swing set; a new double slide; new grills, new water cooler fountains; new screen and LED lights for the pavilion; spring horses repainted; new mulch; and new chain link fence, with a self-latching gate. A huge thank you to the public works staff who helped

facilitate this project and the town clerk for handling the required documentation. The town held the Grand-Opening of the park on July 1, 2023.

The public works employees also repaired a sewer blockage on Dwight Street and provided many locates throughout the year for contractors. They also worked on the bucket truck to repair the bucket hydraulic cylinder and install new needed pins; and repaired the diaphragm trash pump that removes water from line breaks.

Both of the Town's well meters and the sewer meter were calibrated and good for another year.

A water line on Studio Road was repaired after a tree was removed. Another water line break was repaired on Booker Avenue and the manhole at the intersection of Clark Avenue and Morton Street was resealed on the inside to prevent more infiltration.

All of the sewer easements were mowed throughout the town.

The Town updated its Garbage Ordinance and listed new policies and procedures for the residents.

The Town applied for a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant to purchase a new town pick-up truck for the public works department.

Hurricane Idalia crossed over our town in August and fortunately the town was lucky and incurred little to no damage with this storm. There were some short power outages, but they did not last long. All of the Town's protocols and procedures all went well.

The public works employees' exercised water valves on the West end of town and new valves were found and recorded in the Diamond Maps program.

The Town Hall staff successfully prepared and implemented the new FY budget as well as handling all annual renewals and end of the fiscal year reporting.

The Town Hall updated all of its phone lines and internet services with Bluestream Fiber. The services have improved and will save the Town money.

The Town has completed a comprehensive asset survey with the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) who handles all of the Town's various insurances to make sure all assets are listed and covered properly.

Andrews Greene with FRWA assisted the public works employees with calibrating residential water meters and checking for galvanized lateral lines. This process will continue until all meters have been checked. At this time, this process is approximately 75% complete.

The Town's bucket truck was sold, due to high maintenance costs for \$6,000.00 and that payment will go towards the purchase of the need pick-up truck for the public works department.

The Clay County Fire Department held three days of training, for all County fire personnel at our Town's water tower in November. This was interesting to watch, the firefighters climbed to the top of the water tower and repelled down to the ground, as part of their training.

The Town had the SCADA system demo installed at the master lift station to see how it works. This system would show the town staff how to have full remote control and data available by using the telephone. I am considering this system as a future investment for the Town.

The town clerk and I had several workshops with the Planning & Zoning Commission this past year reviewing the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations. The notes and findings of those workshops will be reviewed again in early 2024 and then a joint workshop will be held with the Town Council and the Town's planner to accommodate any questions and concerns; and to provide recommendations moving forward.

All the items mentioned were just the highlights of some of the work being done here in Penney Farms this past year and are in addition to the normal weekly, monthly, and quarterly reporting and many meetings held, that have been done for the Town. I can not express my appreciation enough for such a hard working staff and supportive Town Council.

I am looking forward to continue to serve the Town of Penney Farms and steadily move forward.

BY: David Cooper
Town Manager