

Mayor's Report – November 2022

It seems that the closer we get to the end of the year, the faster the weeks seem to pass. In fact, as of today, we are just over 30 days until we greet 2023. November was no exception and has been a busy month with an election, another hurricane impacting our Town, and final meetings as we tie up FY 2021/2022.

Our election results have been certified with the current commissioners retaining their seats. Thank you to all candidates who were willing to serve and seek to be a part of creating and maintaining the future of our town. I am hopeful that the commission will continue the work that we began a little over a year and a half ago to improve things like our Charter, employee handbook, fee schedule, building reserves, and planning for the future infrastructure needs of our town to mention a few. It is vital for the health of our Town that residents stay involved and participate in the process and ensure integrity among your elected officials.

Our second and hopefully final storm of the year, Hurricane Nicole, landed just a couple weeks ago. While the storm battered our area, I am thankful that the damage was minimal. Though a few residents were negatively impacted, the Town overall, fared well. Driving through after the storm passed, it was easy to see that there was substantially less debris than with Hurricane Ian. As our Public Works team continues to be proactive in maintaining our ditches and swales as well as looking to remove and cut back potential hazards, hopefully our town will continue to pass through storms unscathed.

November is an important month for our Town as we are required by Florida State Statute 166.241 to review, amend, and approve our final budget for FY 2021/2022 by November 30th. During this time our Town Clerk, Finance Committee, and Commission work together to finalize the numbers as we are required to post the final budget on the Town's website within five days of adoption. These final numbers are also necessary as we head into our audit. I am excited that aside from the unplanned expenses for the Sheriff's Department police coverage, we were very close to our numbers and I anticipate seeing our reserves begin the process of building.

Lastly, this is my final meeting as the guard changes this evening. When I joined the Commission two years ago, I never would have predicted that I would find myself in this seat. The last two years, more specifically the last year and a half, has been nothing short of an incredible learning experience. Though trying at times, and honestly feeling like the bottom had fallen out, in all that I did, it was with the goal of preserving our Town and bringing correction and us in line with the law. I am thankful for the commissioners that I've had the privilege to serve alongside. Commissioners who spent many hours in countless meetings as we tried to right the ship. I am thankful to the volunteers in the town that gave of their time and experience to bring improvements to our procedures and general operation. To the residents who stopped to check in, the one who had little kids bring me flowers and another that cooked us a delicious meal. There was a lot that I never shared with you all, out of respect for former employees, but I must tell you that I feel such relief as I look at where we now are. These staff that have all started, and walked into what I can state as ashes, and stayed, thank you. They are taking ownership and making this town better because of

their integrity, talents, and experience. In a time when there are many more jobs than there are employees, I find it encouraging that these five individuals choose to stay. They are treasures and I hope that you all come to see that if you haven't yet. As I was reminded by one of them this last week, the strongest bonds are formed through adversity, and I think that they are a team worth keeping.

There is something about being a public servant, whether elected or employed, that you do the job not for glory or recognition, but because of desire to serve and make things better. I am proud to have worked among you.

As always, thank you for the privilege to serve and I hope to come back to the table in the future.

Tabitha Niemann, Mayor